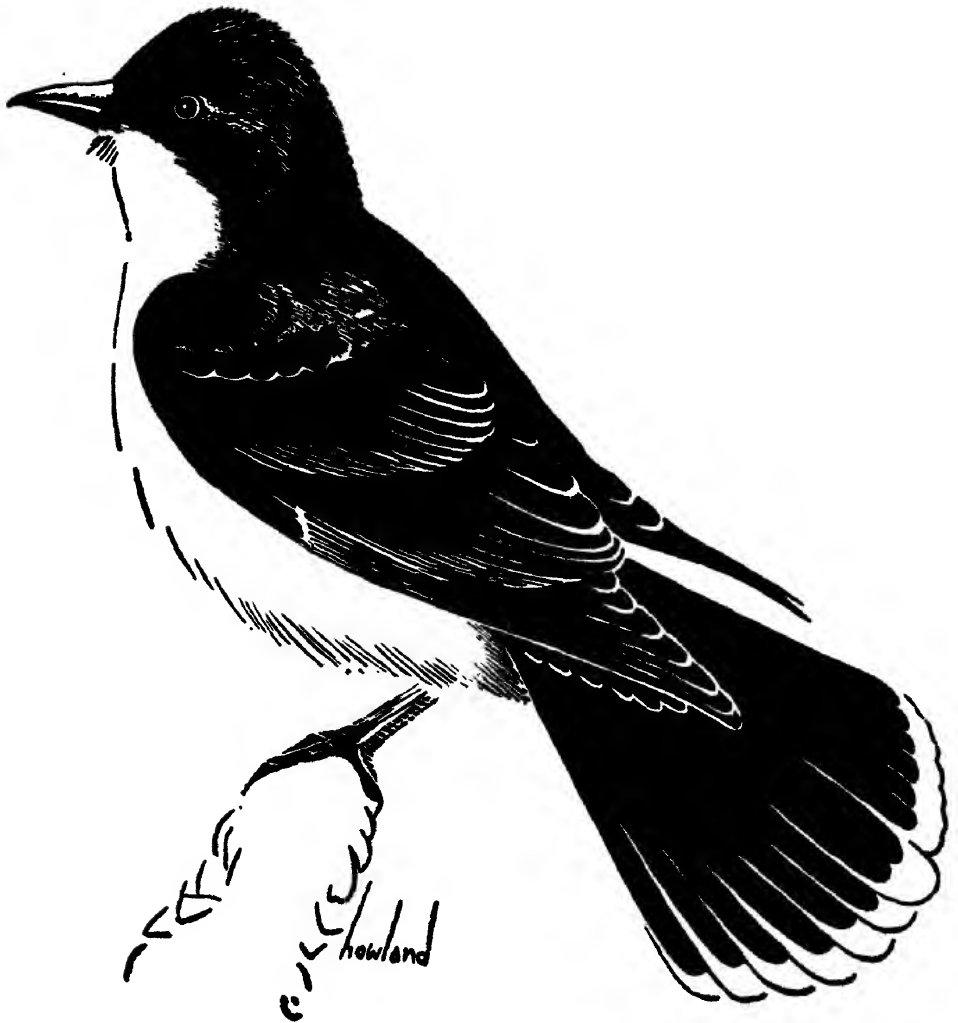


# *The* **KINGBIRD**



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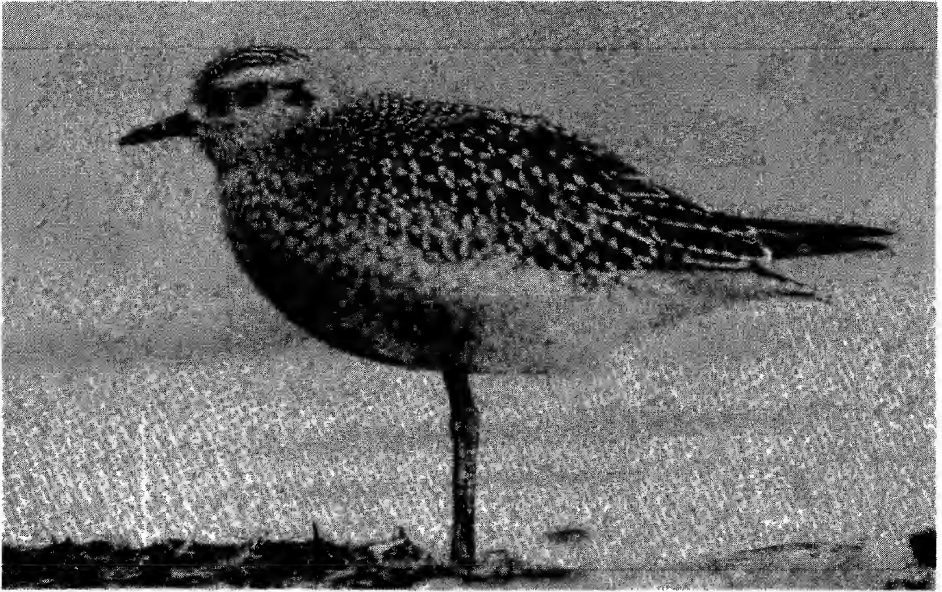
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*Editor* – Paul A. DeBenedictis

*Highlights of the Season*

*Editor* – Robert Spahn

*Circulation Manager* – Constance N. Wilkins



*Lesser Golden-Plover, Juvenal plumage, Mecox, Long Island.*

## THE 1985 FALL SHOREBIRD SEASON AT JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE

ARTHUR MORRIS

*I know because I have seen the Yellowlegs, I have crawled in the mud with the Yellowlegs, and I have followed that banded grey lady to land's end.*<sup>1</sup>

Thirty-five species of shorebirds including New York State's first Rufous-necked Stint were noted at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge (JBWR) during the 1985 fall migration. The refuge was visited fifty-four times between 22 June and 30 November. Every species present was censused at least once a week. My visits averaged three to seven hours in length. Virtually all visits overlapped the time of high tide, when the greatest number of birds fly into the East Pond from surrounding saltwater flats to rest, feed and preen. A majority of these birds disperse to tidal flats throughout Jamaica Bay as the tide recedes.

The refuge was divided into seven survey areas, "A" to "G" (Figure 1). Census results for areas "A" to "F" are presented in Table 1. Two partial censuses are omitted from Table 1. Species diversity is summarized in Table 2. Arrival dates for adults and juveniles of 17 migrant species are summarized in Table 3.

A massive bloom of the filamentous green algae *Cladophora* was observed on my first visit to the East Pond on 9 July. In fact, the high water level which had kept me from visiting the pond until this rather late date had been caused by the algae. The outlet pipe at the north end had become clogged with algae after the gate-valve was opened on 25 June (Clive Pinnock-pers. comm.) The pipe was cleared by refuge personnel and the pond quickly drained to its normal July level. As the pond drained the algae which had been floating at the pond's edges dried and formed dense mats  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick, covering the normally exposed mud flats. These mats, which could be peeled away in huge sheets, persisted until the pond refilled prematurely in early October.

Many species were late this year and numbers for most species were much reduced in July and August (Figure 2). The algae, which covered almost the entire East Pond and all exposed flats in filamentous layers averaging twelve inches thick, made the pond extremely unattractive to returning shorebirds until mid-July. On many July counts the West Pond accounted for 50% to 100% of the daily total. Normally more than 90% of the birds censused during this period frequent the East Pond.

<sup>1</sup> Janovy, John, Jr. *Yellowlegs*. © St. Martin's Press, Inc., New York; reprinted with the publisher's permission.

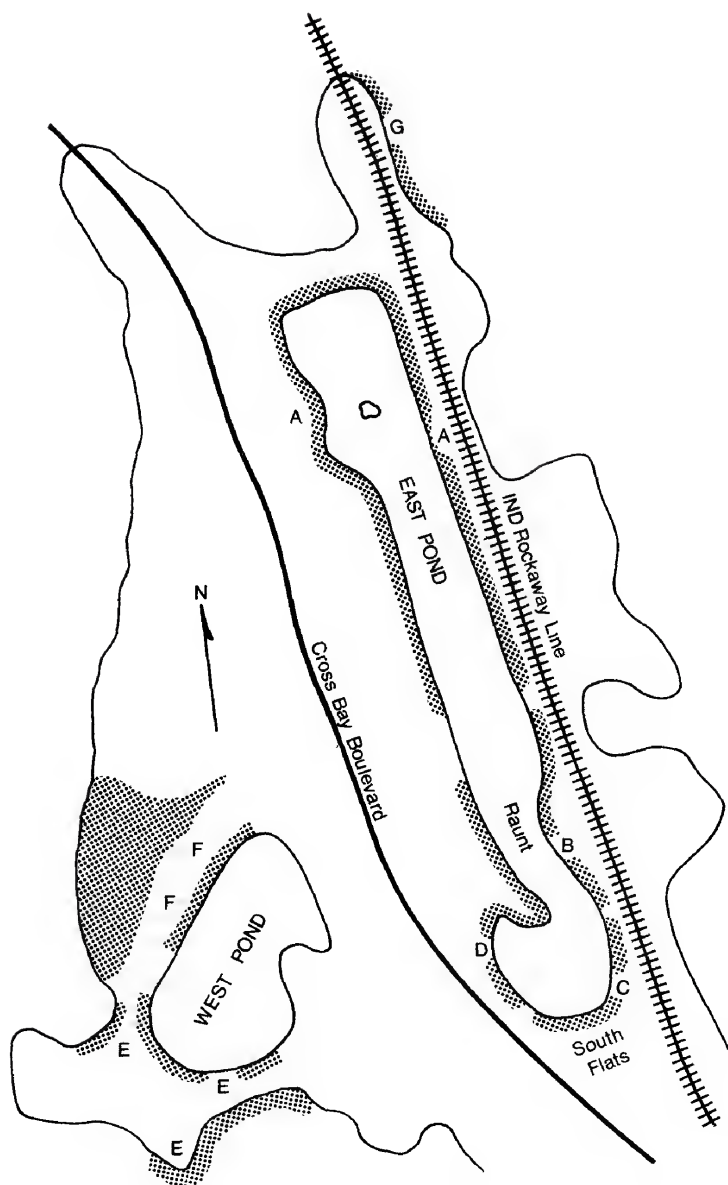


Figure One. Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge Census Area.

Separate East Pond/West Pond data are presented for 28 Aug, to show the differences in both the numbers and the species of birds which normally occur at these two sites (Table 1). Censuses on 2 Sep produced comparable results. The birds which did visit the East Pond in early July uncharacteristically preferred the north end of the pond, especially the northwest quadrant. A large mat of algae just west of the island at the north end of the pond became their primary roost. The Raunt, normally the favored roost during southbound migration, was virtually devoid of birds in July. The entire southern half of the pond including the South Flats, usually a mecca for feeding flocks of the smaller *Calidris*, was sparsely utilized in the early season.

As the algae began to "cook" in the heat of summer it became alive with various forms of insect life. By late July the shorebirds, led by Semipalmated Sandpipers, had begun to feed upon the floating algal mats. By early August good numbers of shorebirds had returned to the Raunt to roost. Hundreds of peep and Semipalmated Plovers were scurrying about the South Flats in search of countless meals to fuel their upcoming trip to South America.

September, the only month in which numbers did not fall below the four-year average, (Davis 1982, 1983 and 1984; Morris 1985) offered consistently good shorebirding. Several less common species were noted. Mats of algae covering about half the pond persisted into late September, when the winds of Hurricane Gloria "grounded" most of the remaining algae along the shores of the northern third of the pond.

The East Pond normally refills very slowly with run-off (rainwater) in October and November. This year, however, the torrential rains which accompanied Hurricane Gloria reduced exposed mud-flats by about 50% in less than a day and several early October rains inundated the remaining flats and covered the Raunt as well. As a result of these high water levels, shorebird numbers for the period were but a fraction of the record numbers present during this period last year, and well below the four-year average. Numbers of the sand and gravel loving species—Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin and Sanderling—were way down as the season progressed into October and November. These birds were present in the region, however. More than a thousand shorebirds of these four species roosted at Zach's Bay, Jones Beach, LI on most high tides. Their low numbers at the East Pond are directly attributable to unfavorable local conditions.

Area "G" was surveyed again this year (Table 4). While shorebird numbers at this site fluctuated wildly, no correlation could be made between the presence of Peregrine Falcons hunting on the East Pond and shorebird numbers at this site, as had been suggested by Davis (1983). Of note was the presence of 607 Red Knot (the season's maximum) on 27 July.

To sum up, many shorebirds came late, left early and were present in well below average numbers. The four year pattern which showed increasing numbers of shorebirds visiting the refuge each year was abruptly and emphatically ended due primarily to unfavorable local conditions: early season algae and late season rains with resultant high water levels.

I would like to thank the many observers who helped to “fill in the gaps,” especially Arthur Berland for the counts of 3 July and 22 August taken while I was out of state. I would also like to thank Tom Davis for his careful review of this manuscript and Rob Villani for his skillful preparation of both the redrawn map and the graph.

This survey was done in cooperation with the International Shorebird Survey, Manomet, Massachusetts.

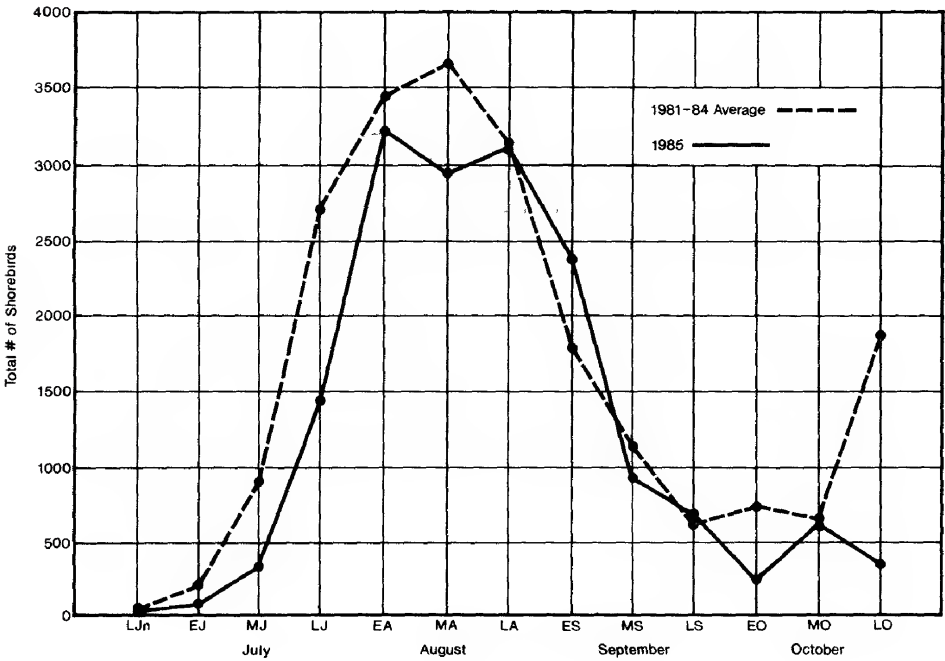
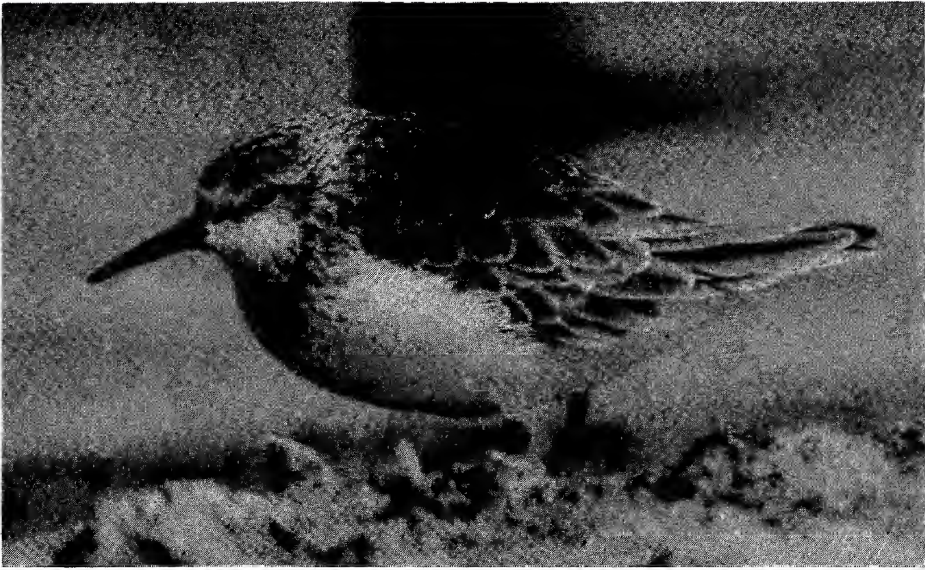


Figure Two: Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge Total Shorebird Counts.



*Western Sandpiper, Basic plumage, Mecox, Long Island.*

#### SELECTED SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Black-bellied Plover:** good numbers of this species roosted at the Raunt from mid-August through September in spite of the presence of hunting Peregrines on several dates. This species was absent from the East Pond during October due to high water levels. Black-bellied Plover were relatively scarce in September and October at Area G, except for an estimated thousand found there on 28 Sep by Rob Villani.

**Lesser Golden Plover:** 12 birds on 11 dates was the lowest total since at least 1980. The previous single day maximum is 21 on 11 Sep 1983.

**Semipalmated Plover:** a below average season for this common migrant.

**Killdeer:** a below average season for the local breeding population. A migrant flock of 46 Killdeer wheeling and calling high above the West Pond on 29 Sep was a remarkable sight. The new maximum (53) counted on this date was more than double the previous high.

**American Oystercatcher:** unprecedented numbers of this species reflect continued explosive increases in local and regional breeding popula-

tions as this species continues its northward range expansion. A new maximum of 125 was recorded on 19 Oct, and 55 were present on 15 Oct. This species lingered in numbers well past the usual departure dates: 25 were still present on 31 Dec! This species is best observed at its high tide roost – the triangular sandy beach just south of the old Tern Nesting Colony.

**American Avocet:** two birds, singles on 6 Aug (not in Table 1) and 27 Sep, was a good showing for this rare but regular western visitant, but neither bird lingered, perhaps being unable to feed in the algae-clogged waters.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** a far below average season. A good showing of juveniles molting into first-winter plumage were present in mid-late October. The first juvenile of this species did not appear until the unusually late date of 24 Aug. The average juvenile arrival date is 13 Aug, and the previous late arrival date was 15 Aug.

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** a well below average season.

**Willet:** local birds were slightly less numerous than usual. Strangely, no Willets were seen in October. A single bird in first-winter plumage seen on 3 Nov probably could be assigned to the western race on the basis of date alone.

**Upland Sandpiper:** one bird of this species “dropped in” momentarily to visit the West Pond on 18 Aug (T. W. Burke).

**Whimbrel:** only three “singles” on 7 and 28 Aug and on 21 Sep were noted.

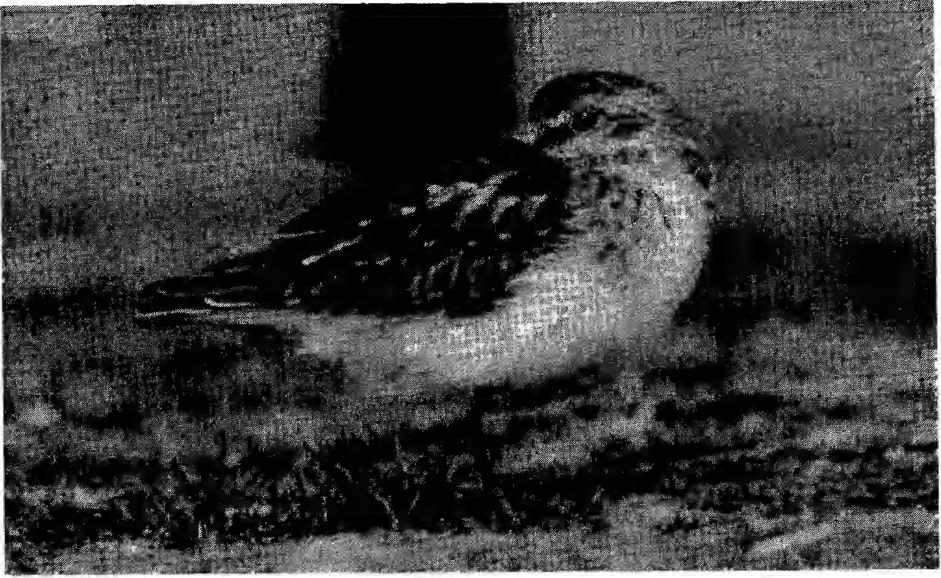
**Hudsonian Godwit:** a below average season for this uncommon migrant. In addition to those reported on Table 1, two were present on 23 July. Only one juvenile was observed this year in marked contrast to last year’s impressive showing.

**Marbled Godwit:** a single juvenile which associated with Oystercatchers at the aforementioned Tern Nesting Beach from 15 to 30 Nov was the only one to visit the refuge this year.

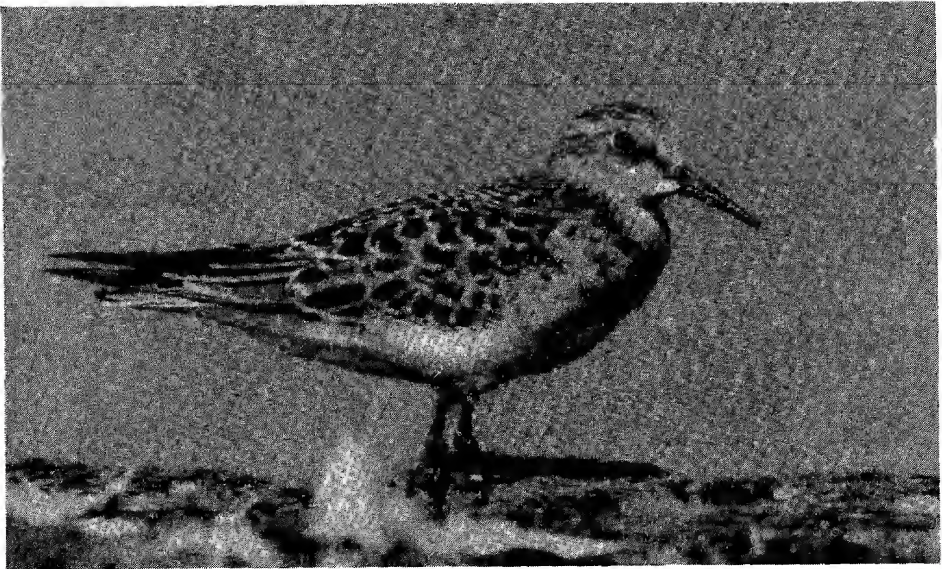
**Ruddy Turnstone:** this species was down 50% and left early. This was one of the many species which usually frequents the Raunt, but which apparently did not care for the algae which covered the rocks, boards, building stones and other debris upon which they prefer to roost.

**Red Knot:** a well below average season with numbers late in arriving and early to leave, probably for the same reasons as affected Ruddy Turnstone.

**Sanderling:** down almost 90%! This bird has become uncommon on the East Pond in the past two years, probably due to changes in its preferred microhabitat.



*Least Sandpiper, Juvenal plumage.*



*Baird's Sandpiper, fresh Juvenal plumage.*

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** though number arrived late, this was the only abundant migrant to have an above average season. They were the first species to adapt to the algae by picking insects from the surface of acres of algal mats. A new maximum 2291, barely exceeding the old, was recorded on 3 Aug.

**Rufous-necked Stint:** Morris (1986) provides full details of this record.

**Least Sandpiper:** adults were scarcely evident in July and August and juveniles were below average in August and September. The last was noted on the unusually early departure date of 8 Oct. Of note was an adult of this species completely molted into winter plumage photographed by this observer on 7 Oct.

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** a below average season.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** the 2 or 3 birds of this species which visited the refuge this season uncharacteristically remained for quite some time; one was seen on most visits from 28 Aug to 30 Sep.

**Dunlin:** down almost 90% in Oct, apparently due to high water levels. This is marked contrast to the hordes of Dunlin counted in 1984.

**Curlew Sandpiper:** a fading adult seen sporadically on the West Pond 22-27 Jul was first discovered by Ron Borque. A surprisingly bright breeding-plumaged adult was present on the East Pond 17-21 Sep. A fresh-plumaged juvenile was present on the East Pond 25 Sep through 1 Oct.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** a far below average season was again apparently due to unfavorable conditions. The algae which clogged the shallows at the pond's edges apparently prevented those birds which probe for food deep in the water from feeding. Juvenile Stilt Sandpipers were markedly scarce this year; this observer encountered only a scant handful.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** singles were noted on 18 Aug and 7 Sep.

**Ruff:** a Ruff discovered by this observer on 25 Sep was the first in Juvenal plumage to occur at JBWR. It remained until 30 Sep.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** down 70% during its migratory peak, mid-July to mid-August, probably due to algae-clogged feeding areas.

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** adult numbers slightly down, juveniles slightly up. A juvenile of this species arrived on the record early date of 14 Sep and two were present the following day. The previous early date was 22 Sep.

**American Woodcock:** a new maximum of 12, flushed from the South Garden on 18 Aug (R. J. Kurtz), may indicate successful local breeding. A group of nine encountered the same day in the North Garden probably involved the same birds.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** very few individuals of this species were noted at the pond this season. In addition to those in Table 1, one was reported on 11 Sep.

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35 *Mimosa Lane, Staten Island, New York 10312*

Table 1. JBWR 1985 Fall Shorebird Census

Species	June			July					
	22	28	29	3	9	12	15	18	19
Plover, Black-bellied						1			
Semipalmated							3	2	25
Killdeer	3	10	10	18	7	13	21	4	12
Oystercatcher, American				1	3			7	
Yellowlegs, Greater			1	3	6	10	39	17	16
Lesser				7	5	6	77	2	24
Sandpiper, Solitary								(1)	
Willet	3	3	4	12	1		1	2	
Sandpiper, Spotted					1	1	2	1	2
Whimbrel									
Godwit, Hudsonian								(1)	
Turnstone, Ruddy								3	1
Knot, Red								7	G
Sanderling							G		G
Sandpiper, Semipalmated					4		46	162	127
Western									1
Stint, Rufous-necked									
Sandpiper, Least					5	3	7	1	16
White-rumped									
Pectoral									
Curlew									
Stilt					1		4	(1)	1
Dowitcher, Short-billed				5	61	115	181	155	170
Long-billed								(5)	
Woodcock, American				2			6		
Phalarope, Wilson's	(1)								
No. of Species	3	2	3	7	10	7	12	16	13
No. of Individuals	7	13	15	48	94	149	387	371	395
Areas covered, East Pond					C	B,C	A-D	A-C	A-D
West Pond	E,F	E,F	E,F	E,F	E,F	E,F	E,F	E,F	

( ) = reported by others; √ = numbers not counted;

N/A = not applicable; G = present in area G

Table 1. JBWR 1985 Fall Shorebird Census

Species	July			am	pm	August			
	20	22	27	28	28	3	7	11	13
Plover, Black-bellied			4	2	✓	67	25	317	253
Semipalmated	10	84	177	70	30	530	437	706	437
Killdeer	5	9	3	2	✓	4	5	8	1
Oystercatcher, American		3			13	12	(5)	9	
Yellowlegs, Greater	20	19	26	15	✓	41	12	81	130
Lesser	10	16	14	10	✓	13	26	54	65
Sandpiper, Solitary			1						
Willet							1	4	
Sandpiper, Spotted	2	4	1	1	✓	1	3	2	2
Whimbrel							(1)		
Godwit, Hudsonian	(1)		(1)						
Turnstone, Ruddy	G	10	60	10	4	26	48	114	3
Knot, Red	20	19	142	5	6	6	(2)	362	66
Sanderling	G	4	3	20	30	4	5	2	
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	150	764	1772	350	800	2291	2136	2206	695
Western	1		5	2	1	3	4		1
Stint, Rufous-necked			(1)	1	1	1	1	1	
Sandpiper, Least	5	20	17	10	1	9	19	12	29
White-rumped				(1)		4	7	4	5
Pectoral	1	1				(1)	2	3	3
Curlew		1	1						
Stilt	3	2	11	5	✓	4	4	5	
Dowitcher, Short-billed	100	573	69	30	10	44	98	48	39
Long-billed	1	1	(4)		(3)	2	2	(2)	2
Woodcock, American									
Phalarope, Wilson's								(1)	1
No. of Species	16	16	19	16	17	20	21	20	16
No. of Individuals	N/A	1530	2312	534	N/A	3064	2842	3941	1733
Areas covered, East Pond	A	A-D	A-D	A-D	A	A-D	A-D	A-D	A-D
West Pond	(E)	E	(F)	(E)		(E)	E	E	

( ) = reported by others; ✓ = numbers not counted;

N/A = not applicable; G = present in area G

Table 1. JBWR 1985 Fall Shorebird Census

Species	August							
	14	16	22	24	28	28	29	31
Plover, Black-bellied	7	405	796	654	✓	1	✓	606
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated	350	897	980	994	400	3	150	284
Killdeer		3	6	6	4	2	5	8
Oystercatcher, American		10		2		2		3
Yellowlegs, Greater	20	141	78	106	✓	3	182	328
Lesser	10	39	63	18	12	1	14	56
Sandpiper, Solitary								(1)
Willet		1		1		1		2
Sandpiper, Spotted		4	3	2	✓		✓	1
Whimbrel					(1)			
Godwit, Hudsonian		1			(1)			1
Turnstone, Ruddy	1	26	68	27	✓		✓	13
Knot, Red		243	495	227	✓		✓	249
Sanderling	2	2	7	156	✓		✓	1
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	250	1262	1208	750	700	2	300	451
Western			2	4	6			5
Least	5	18	92	57	✓	11	✓	25
White-rumped	1	9	12	5	✓	1	7	5
Baird's					(1)			(1)
Pectoral		3	3	5	✓		✓	5
Dunlin		1	1	1	1		2	1
Sandpiper, Curlew								
Stilt	5	5	11	5	27		9	15
Buff-breasted								
Ruff								
Dowitcher, Short-billed	20	154	237	62	✓		✓	131
Long-billed	2	7	1	7	✓		7	5
Woodcock, American								
Phalarope, Wilson's	1			1	(1)			1
No. of Species	13	20	18	21	22	10	18	24
No. of Individuals	N/A	3232	4064	3091	N/A	27	N/A	2198
Areas covered, East Pond	A	A-D	A-C	A-D	B,C		A-C	A-D
West Pond		E		E,F		E		E

( ) = reported by others; ✓ = numbers not counted;

N/A = not applicable; G = present in area G

**Table 1. JBWR 1985 Fall Shorebird Census**

Species	September								
	2	7	8	12	14	15	17	21	25
Plover, Black-bellied	3	650		147	311	✓	485	336	148
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated		350		107	17	✓	13	64	39
Killdeer	3	5	1	6	19	✓	11	28	11
Oystercatcher, American	55	(62)	1	(52)	17			54	
Yellowlegs, Greater		95	25	116	121	✓	143	82	39
Lesser	2	65	13	13	11	✓	42	42	10
Sandpiper, Solitary			1						
Willet					(1)			(1)	
Sandpiper, Spotted				1					
Whimbrel								(1)	
Godwit, Hudsonian		3		1		1	1	1	
Turnstone, Ruddy		11		G	1	✓	3	2	
Knot, Red		200	17	13	1	45	137	94	5
Sanderling				G	1	2	4	1	2
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	12	800	7	472	118	✓	228	188	159
Western		16			1	2	(4)	(1)	4
Least	8	37	3	19	13	✓	11	51	11
White-rumped		3		1	1	2	2	4	29
Baird's		1		1	(1)	(1)	1	(1)	
Pectoral		2		1		2	3	9	7
Dunlin		2		12	7	✓	17	46	27
Sandpiper, Curlew							1	(1)	1
Stilt		1			1				1
Buff-breasted		(1)							
Ruff									1
Dowitcher, Short-billed		85		57	49	✓	31	28	27
Long-billed					1	2	6	1	3
Woodcock, American		2							1
Phalarope, Wilson's									1
No. of Species	6	20	8	19	20	19	20	23	21
No. of Individuals	83	2391	68	1020	693	N/A	1144	1037	528
Areas covered, East Pond	A-D		A-D		B-D	B-D	A-D	A-D	A-D
West Pond	E,F	E	E	(E)	E			E,F	

( ) = reported by others; ✓ = numbers not counted;

N/A = not applicable; G = present in area G

**Table 1. JBWR 1985 Fall Shorebird Census**

Species	September			October					
	27	29	30	1	7	8	14	19	23
Plover, Black-bellied	4	84	✓				31	2	
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated		1	1						
Killdeer	20	2	✓				5		1
Oystercatcher, American	3	53	✓	✓	1	2	1	13	
Avocet, American	3	67	✓			67	(50)	125	
Yellowlegs, Greater	(1)								
Lesser	19	86	✓	2	13	21	394	131	274
Sandpiper, Solitary	7	28	✓	4	19	7	5	3	2
Willet		1	1						
Sandpiper, Spotted			(2)						
Godwit, Hudsonian			(1)						
Marbled			1		1	1	1		
Turnstone, Ruddy		G	G		G		5		G
Knot, Red	1	6	2		G		1		
Sanderling		G	✓		G			G	G
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	38	46	✓	✓	42	61	31	15	
Western		1	3	1	8	6	5	1	
Least	4	6	✓	✓	24	2			
White-rumped		6	15	✓	12	12	8	3	
Baird's		1	1						
Pectoral	4	5	14	3	19	12	19		1
Dunlin	1	14	✓	1	27	67	179	153	117
Sandpiper, Curlew		1	1	1					
Stilt	2	2	6	2	2	1	5		1
Ruff		1	1						
Dowitcher, Short-billed	16	9	✓	1	7	5	9	9	4
Long-billed		1	2	3	1		32	1	3
Snipe, Common						1	1	1	
Phalarope, Wilson's			1						
No. of Species	13	24	27	14	16	14	17	13	10
No. of Individuals	N/A	422	N/A	N/A	176	265	782	457	403
Areas covered, East Pond	B-D	A-D	A-D	D	A-D	B-D	A-D	A-D	A-D
West Pond			E						

( ) = reported by others; ✓ = numbers not counted;

N/A = not applicable; G = present in area G

Table 1. JBWR 1985 Fall Shorebird Census

Species	October	November						
	27	3	8	11	16	17	23	30
Plover, Black-bellied	2	5		49		4		
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated		1		1				
Killdeer	2	1		2	10	7		
Oystercatcher, American	96	103		(55)		59	68	
Avocet, American								
Yellowlegs, Greater	223	12		105		42	9	1
Lesser	4	2		3				
Sandpiper, Solitary								
Willet		1						
Sandpiper, Spotted								
Godwit, Hudsonian								
Marbled						(1)	1	(1)
Turnstone, Ruddy	G	G						
Knot, Red	G							
Sanderling	G	G		2				
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	7	4						
Western	2	1						
Least								
White-rumped	4			1				
Baird's								
Pectoral	4	3		2		(2)		
Dunlin	104	133	7	999	65	49	4	14
Sandpiper, Curlew								
Stilt								
Ruff								
Dowitcher, Short-billed	1							
Long-billed	19	8		11		(1)		
Snipe, Common								
Phalarope, Wilson's								
No. of Species	15	14	1	11	2	8	4	3
No. of Individuals	468	274	7	1230	75	165	82	16
Areas covered, East Pond	A-D	A-D	A	A-D		A-D	C	
West Pond	E	E,F		E	E	E	E	E

( ) = reported by others; √ = numbers not counted;  
N/A = not applicable; G = present in area G

**Table 2. Species Diversity 1981-1985**

	Late Jun & E. Jul	Late Jul	Early Aug	Late Aug	Early Sep	Late Sep	Early Oct	Late Oct & Nov
1981	14	25	25	26	26	27	23	21
1982	13	24	25	29	31	30	26	19
1983	12	27	24	26	31	28	22	22
1984	13	25	29	26	28	29	26	21
1985	15	24	25	29	27	30	22	20

(Note – American Woodcock is presumed to be present throughout the season whether observed in a given period or not.)

**Table 3. 1985 Arrival Dates of Adults and Juveniles  
Seven Year Span of Arrival, and Mean Arrival Dates**

	1985		Adults			Juveniles		
	First Adult	First Juvenile	Span No. Years		Mean Arrival Date	Span No. Years		Mean Arrival Date
Plover, Black-bellied	late July*	31 Aug	late July*		— —	8/26-9/11	(5)	31 Aug
Lesser Golden	3 Sep	29 Aug	8/14-9/3	(6)	25 Aug	8/29-9/11	(5)	5 Sep
Semipalmated	15 Jul	14 Aug	6/30-7/15	(5)	7 Jul	8/11-22	(6)	18 Aug
Yellowlegs, Greater	29 Jun	24 Aug	6/22-30	(5)	27 Jun	8/7-24	(4)	16 Aug
Lesser	3 Jul	3 Aug	6/24-7/3	(6)	29 Jun	8/1-11	(7)	6 Aug
Turnstone, Ruddy	18 Jul	24 Aug	7/19-23	(5)	20 Jul	8/21-28	(4)	24 Aug
Knot, Red	18 Jul	15 Aug	7/16-22	(5)	18 Jul	8/15-22	(5)	20 Aug
Sanderling	15 Jul	24 Aug	7/15-22	(5)	18 Jul	8/23-28	(4)	26 Aug
Sandpiper,								
Semipalmated	9 Jul	7 Aug	6/24-7/10	(6)	1 Jul	8/7-15	(5)	12 Aug
Western	19 Jul	12 Aug	7/12-24	(5)	17 Jul	8/12-22	(4)	16 Aug
Least	9 Jul	3 Aug	6/28-7/9	(5)	3 Jul	7/26-8/8	(5)	3 Aug
White-rumped	28 Jul	15 Sep	7/18-31	(5)	25 Jul	9/13-10/2	(6)	21 Sep
Pectoral	20 Jul	31 Aug	7/11-20	(5)	16 Jul	8/22-29	(5)	27 Aug
Dunlin	**	12 Sep	**		— —	9/5-18	(6)	13 Sep
Sandpiper, Stilt	9 Jul	22 Aug	7/9-20	(5)	15 Jul	7/26-8/22	(6)	14 Aug
Dowitcher,								
Short-billed	3 Jul	9 Aug	6/24-7/3	(6)	29 Jun	8/8-15	(7)	10 Aug
Long-billed	18 Jul	14 Sep	7/18-23	(5)	21 Jul	9/14-10/8	(5)	26 Sep

\* difficult to determine; lingering non-breeding birds often present.

\*\* only scattered adults (often injured) present before the 2nd week of Sep.

Note: this table was adapted from Davis, 1984 and includes unpublished juv. arriv. dates from the 1984 season (Morris)

Table 4. Area G Censuses

Species	July					August		
	15	19	20	22	27	3	11	16
Plover, Black-bellied								
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated					7	31		20
Killdeer						2	1	
Yellowlegs, Lesser					2			
Turnstone, Ruddy		4	4		45	2		
Knot, Red		15	35	1	607			5
Sanderling	3	46	60	186	22	9	1	20
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	54	295	180	27	103	13	1	60
Western								
Sandpiper, Least	1	1	1					
White-rumped								
Dunlin								
Dowitcher, Short-billed	3	45	60	2	31			
No. of Species	4	6	6	4	7	5	3	4
No. of Individuals	61	406	340	216	817	57	3	105

Species	August		September			October		
	24	3	12	21	28	29	30	7
Plover, Black-bellied			550	180	1000	138	17	101
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated			1		2	1		
Killdeer								
Yellowlegs, Lesser								
Turnstone, Ruddy	5		3	1		1	1	1
Knot, Red	1		5	36	18			20
Sanderling	78		7	84	27	46		156
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	1	8		13	5	1		1
Western								5
Sandpiper, Least								
White-rumped						1		
Dunlin				63	8	18		352
Dowitcher, Short-billed					13			1
No. of Species	5	2	5	7	7	7	2	8
No. of Individuals	96	20	566	378	1073	206	18	637

**Table 4. Area G Censuses**

<b>Species</b>	<b>October</b>				<b>November</b>			
	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>
Plover, Black-bellied	153		63	24	4	11	2	
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated Killdeer								
Yellowlegs, Lesser								
Turnstone, Ruddy	3		4	1	1	1		
Knot, Red	2			1				
Sanderling		7	89	9	8	6		
Sandpiper, Semipalmated Western								
Sandpiper, Least White-rumped				2				
Dunlin	1	4	97	65	81	481		
Dowitcher, Short-billed								
No. of Species	4	2	4	6	4	4	1	0
No. of Individuals	159	11	253	102	94	499	2	0

# A REVIEW OF THE RED CROSSBILL IN NEW YORK STATE

## Part 1. Historical and nomenclatural background.

ROBERT W. DICKERMAN

### Introduction

The currently published taxonomic and distributional information on the subspecies of the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) is more complex and confused, or just plain wrong, than for any other North American avian species. This is in part due to the amazing and erratic movement patterns in which a population (or section thereof) may move thousands of miles, find suitable habitat and nest, and then disappear, apparently to return to their "core" region of distribution. This confusion has been further compounded by poor ornithology and by ornithological politics.

I decided to bring together specimens collected since K. C. Parkes (1952) last reviewed the status of the species in New York to help identify specimens salvaged from the massive 1984-1985 incursion into the northeast, the best documented invasion in decades. During the course of this study I found additional historical material that Parkes had not examined, and realized the need to correct some erroneous records of the species for New York. I contacted museum and educational institution collections for the loan of materials from New York (and from elsewhere in the northeast). I specifically requested the loan of all specimens collected since 1951, or not seen earlier by Parkes, and all specimens with a wing chord of 85 mm or greater collected since 1900. Birds with a wing chord measurement of less than 85 mm usually belong to the population whose "core" range is the Pacific northwestern coastal region. This invading subspecies is actually the one that has been recorded most frequently in New York during the last 70 years! The curators who kindly provided material are acknowledged beyond. A total of 77 specimens not examined by Parkes, mostly taken after 1950, was assembled. This total included 8 formalin injected mummies without date or locality but probably obtained during the last 20 years from within a radius of 20 miles of Oswego. The vast majority of all of these specimens was salvaged from road kills.

### Review of Nomenclature

I must first attempt to explain the nomenclatural mess that North American Red Crossbills are in before I use trinomial names for the specimens from New York State. I will begin in 1934 and work forward and back as needed to clarify points. In that year A. J. van Rossem published a study of some old type specimens of North American taxa in European museums, including the types of *Loxia pusilla* Gloger (from Georgia) and *L. minor* Brehm (later shown to be from Michigan – for details regarding these types see van Rossem 1934 and Payne 1986).

He provided an excellent photograph of the two types and the measurements of the type of *pusilla*, but he forgot to measure the type of *minor*.

Van Rossem considered *pusilla* to represent "the larger crossbill of eastern North America," not realizing that the Newfoundland and the southern Appalachian populations were distinct. Thus, van Rossem started the erroneous use of *pusilla* in place of Bent's name *percna* for the Newfoundland subspecies. Later in a letter to L. Griscom, who was then working on his monograph of the species in the New World (Griscom 1937, p. 107), van Rossem stated that *minor* was the smallest billed bird of all.

We must next review Griscom's 1937 monograph, the first real synthesis of the North American populations. Figure 1A presents the approximate distribution of the subspecies as defined in that paper. Griscom did make two correct decisions. He followed van Rossem in applying the name *minor* to the population of the Pacific coastal region from northern Washington to Alaska, the smallest of the New World subspecies (indeed the smallest of all subspecies), making *L. c. sitkensis* Grinnell a synonym of *minor*. Because *minor* was no longer available as the name for the northeastern population for which it had been widely used, Griscom named this population *L. c. neogaea* based primarily on a large series of nesting birds collected in Maine. The rest of Griscom's decisions were wrong.

1. He recognized, but did not name, a small (wing under 85 mm) nesting population in the southern Appalachians – not recognizing that this was an invasion of *minor* from the Pacific northwest! That subspecies occasionally nests when abundant food is encountered after making a massive invasion eastwards, as it did in New York in 1984-1985.

2. He rejected the name *percna* described for the Newfoundland population of large dark birds, considering it a synonym of *pusilla*.

3. He ascribed the name *L. c. bendirei* (described as a large subspecies from western Oregon by Ridgway), to a population of medium-sized birds probably from an area of intergradation between *bendirei* and *minor*. He then inconsistently recognized this western population of medium-sized birds, although he considered that they probably were not separable from his eastern form *neogaea*.

4. He then named two large subspecies, *benti* from North Dakota and *grinnelli* from California.

Parkes (1952), in his discussions of the specimens of the species from New York, followed van Rossem in using *pusilla* for the Newfoundland subspecies, and later (1954) reconfirmed his belief that *minor* was the correct name for the northeastern population.

Unfortunately, the American Ornithologists Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature that prepared the fifth edition (1957) of the AOU Check-list accepted most of Griscom's errors but rejected his correct decisions! Thus *sitkensis* was maintained for the small stubby-

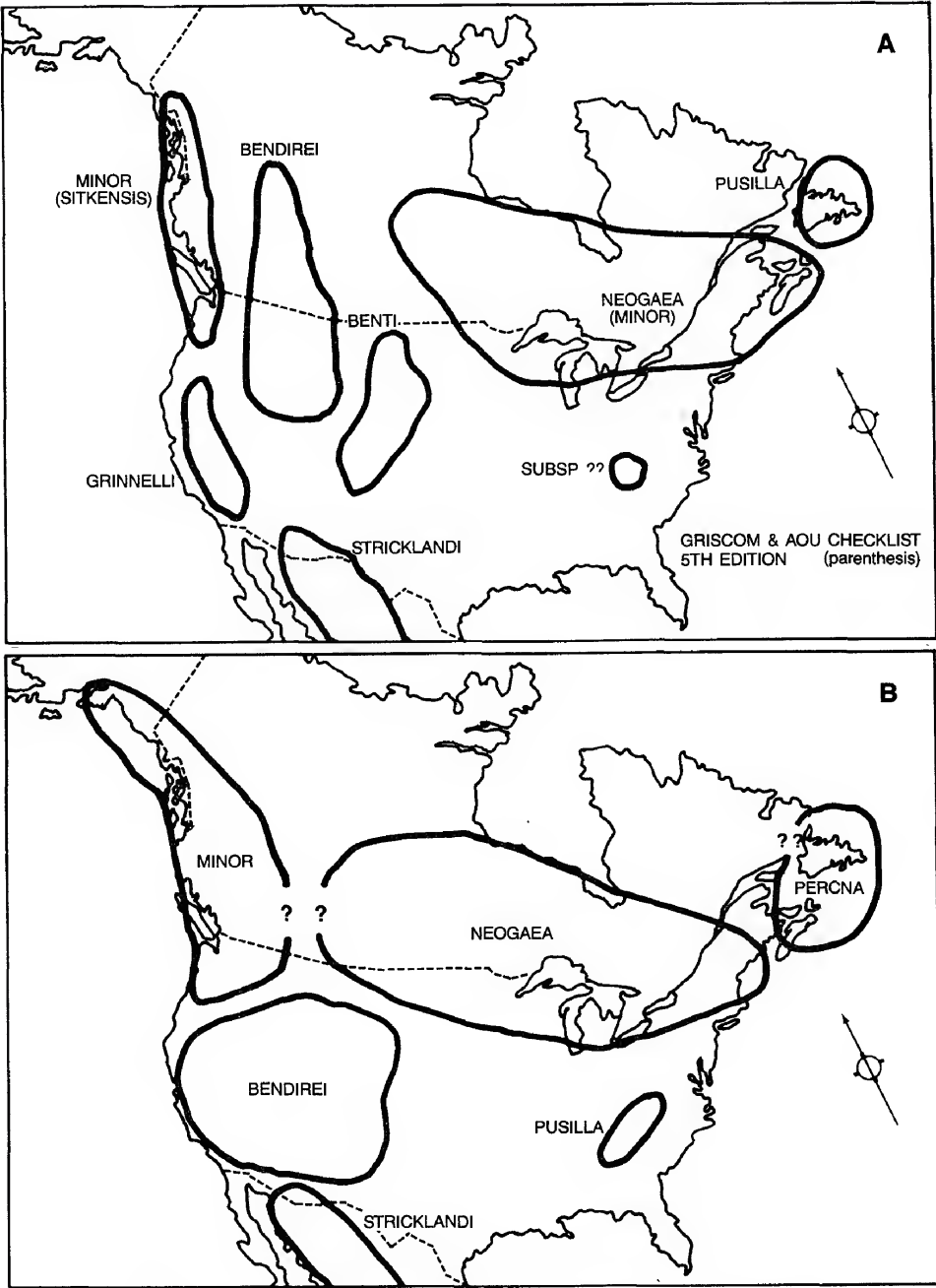


Figure 1. Distribution of "core ranges" of Red Crossbill subspecies.

billed population (for which it has almost become a common name); *minor* was used for the northeastern population; and the names *bendirei*, *benti* and *grinnelli* were used as defined by Griscom (fig. 1A). Most subsequent authors including Howell (1968) and Bull (1974) have followed this usage.

Without question the only person, since Griscom, who has examined over 90% of the specimens of Red Crossbill from the New World is Allan R. Phillips. Most bear one or more of his sometimes changed, and often cryptic annotations, some dating back decades. Unfortunately, he has not provided us with a lucid detailed discussion correcting past errors nor explained clearly his concepts of the species. However, his contributions are significant.

Phillips wisely, in the non-technical book *The Birds of Arizona* (Phillips, Marshall and Monson, 1964), essentially followed the AOU Check-list's nomenclature. However, he placed *grinnelli* in the synonymy of *benti*; indicated that *bendirei* was probably the correct name for the pale, large Rocky Mountain subspecies, and that *minor* was probably the proper name for "*sitkensis*." Later, incidental to a paper on age and sex determination in the species (Phillips 1977), he provided a size-class schema from small, class I, to large, class IV. Then, oddly placed as an appendix to the revised edition of the Checklist of the Birds of Arizona (Monson and Phillips 1981), he presented a partial revision of the Red Crossbill as follows, (AOU names are in quotes).

- I. Smallest – *minor* ("*sitkensis*")
- II. Small – *neogaea* and *pusilla* ("*minor*" and "*bendirei*")
- III. Large – *bendirei* and *percna* ("*benti*", "*grinnelli*" and "*pusilla*")
- IV. Largest – *stricklandi*

Figure 1B presents the approximate distributions of the "core ranges" of those forms as I understand them. In an irruptive species such as the Red Crossbill, which during a year of cone-crop failure may move hundreds or thousands of miles and, upon reaching a region with abundant food, may settle and even nest within the range of another subspecies, the usual term "breeding range" is meaningless. The "breeding range" of the subspecies *minor* for example would include the region British Columbia to New York! After nesting the invading population disappears, presumably to return to its own "core range."

Phillips (1981) also added two new names to the parthenon; *vividior* for class II birds from El Paso County, Colorado, and *raei* for class I birds from Dismal Lake, Shoshone County, Idaho. He also, properly in my opinion, rejected a multiple species concept for the various forms of Red Crossbill that does not take into account the biology of the species as a whole. Although the morphologically distinctive subspecies make massive irratric movements, and even nest within the core ranges of other subspecies, they maintain their separateness probably through the development of intra-group language that reduces out-breeding.

Still, the number of specimens intermediate between the various morphological groups is ample evidence that there are no absolute reproductive barriers between populations of Red Crossbill.

The most recent contribution, an important one by Payne (1986), is still in press, but was kindly loaned to me by the author. He was able to borrow from Berlin the types of *minor* and *pusilla* to measure and, at last, to compare them with *series of specimens*. He has demonstrated beyond question that *minor* is the same as "*sitkensis*" and that *pusilla* does represent the class II population of the southern Appalachians. He formally designated the larger of the two co-types of *bendirei* to be the lectotype, restoring Ridgway's original intent that this name represent large western birds. He defined *percna* as well marked in color, size and bill shape. Unfortunately, in his multivariate analysis he used series composed of two or three subspecies, especially from Michigan and from the southern Appalachians. Thus the characters of the rather well marked forms *minor*, *bendirei* and *neogaea* were blurred.

The accumulated series of specimens from a region, such as New York, can be compared to a series of sedimentary layers made up of two, three or four kinds of material (*i.e.*, subspecies). The layer (sample series) from any one year usually is made up of a single kind of material. For example, since 1939 both an invading subspecies and the local subspecies have been taken in New York in only five years, and two invading subspecies have been taken only once during the same year (in 1985). Thus, the layers are remarkably homogeneous. However, if one were to drill vertically through the layers, *i.e.* to mix the specimens, you would obtain a biologically irrelevant artifact.

In a subsequent paper I will discuss a change in the status of the Red Crossbill in New York and the northeast since the turn of the century, define subspecific characters, and identify the New York State specimens.

Currently Jeffery G. Groth, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, is undertaking a modern revision of the species in North America, using morphological, electrophoretic, vocal and ecological data. Thus, conclusions reached in this series of papers must be considered tentative pending the publication of his major monograph.

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## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

**An Instance of Apparently Altruistic Behavior on the Part of an Evening Grosbeak** – Northern birdwatchers are familiar with the noisy and scrappy behavior of the Evening Grosbeak. It seems, at times, to resemble the House Sparrow more than its native North American neighbors. On 13 January 1986 the following incident challenged my thinking on this issue.

There were about 40 grosbeaks feeding on sunflower seed. As often happens, the entire flock decided to take off at once. One male grosbeak flew into a window, tumbling to the ground. I went out to fill the feeders and checked to see whether this bird was killed. It was stunned, and unwilling to fly. I uprighted the bird where it had fallen and departed. From the window, I watched the return of the flock. One of the male grosbeaks, feeding on the ground close to the injured bird, gingerly picked up a seed, opened it, and passed the meat into the mouth of the wounded bird. The stunned individual consumed the sunflower meat, and continued to rest for a couple of minutes, then flew to a tree nearby to rest.

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

This winter season is well summarized by DeBenedictis as “—best finished and forgotten as quickly as possible.” The Regional highlights from across the state generally support this. Once again, we are left with major gaps in coverage, with no reports from Regions 8 and 10.

The winter's weather provided few extremes of any duration to unduly tax either birds or birders in most areas. The most stressful period for birders would have been surviving Buffalo's gloom and snowfall on 29 of December's 31 days. The weather was relatively uniform across the state. December was cold and the snowiest month. The first half of January was cold, followed by a thaw that lasted into early February. February ended on a cold note. Total snowfall typically was well below average. There are many reports of half-hardy species present surviving at least into February. At the season's end there was little sign of early spring migrants, in contrast with the past several years.

As suggested by the opening line, the general birding picture was blah. Even the Christmas Bird Counts, which we look to as indicators of the season, mostly logged average numbers. Wild food crops generally were reported as low, as expected after last winter's superabundance. The result was somewhat better numbers of birds at feeders than last winter. Winter incursive species were scarce in most Regions, as were the typical half-hardy species. The winter finch year we have awaited for several years now, and which appeared imminent in November, petered out as numbers of most species fell off rapidly through December. Even small flocks were hard to find by the time listers started anew on 1 January.

Focusing on the major families and groups, waterfowl generally were low in numbers in spite of open water in many areas. Regions 3 and 9 reported the best concentrations and Regions 4, 6, 7 and 9 had good counts for the Federation's annual Waterfowl Census in mid-January. Of special interest, we note a Greater White-fronted Goose in Region 9; wintering Wood Duck in six regions, with a record winter high of 24 in Region 2; overwintering Ring-necked Ducks in four regions; 15,000 Oldsquaw in Region 1; and Harlequin Ducks in Regions 6 and 7.

Unexpected among the raptors were Turkey Vultures in Region 2 and 3, an Osprey in Region 1 in mid-January, and a light phase Gyr Falcon in Region 5. Bald Eagles were present in all Regions that reported with an excellent count of 58 individuals in Region 9. Accipiter numbers were high in the Regions that noted them. American Kestrels generally were scarce. There was a fair mix of owls reported, but numbers were down from last year; was this a weather effect?

Turning to incursive species, Rough-legged Hawks were present in good numbers only in the central to eastern southern tier of Regions 3, 4 and 9. There were few Snowy Owls. Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce except in Regions 4 and 7. Bohemian Waxwings were noted across the northern tier of Regions, with very high counts of 134 in Region 5 and 400 in Region 6. Northern Shrikes were noted in all Regions. American Tree Sparrow numbers were good. Lapland Longspurs were scarce. Snow Buntings were present in all Regions, with the best count 3000 from Region 2. The winter finch incursion included Hoary Redpolls in only Regions 5 and 6 and very high Christmas Bird Counts for Pine Grosbeak in Region 6.

Shorebirds were very scarce, as expected in the absence of the Region 10 report. A surprise was two jaeger species from Region 1 and a Parasitic Jaeger in Region 2. Gulls were best in Regions 1 and 5. Other notes of interest included Thayer's Gulls, the best numbers of white-winged gulls, and very high counts of Great Black-backed Gull, all in Regions 5 and 6.

The general passerine picture was of good variety overall, but of low numbers of half hardy species at any given location. Of special note for lack of numbers were Northern Flicker; Hermit Thrush; Song, Swamp, and White-throated Sparrows; and most of the blackbirds. Of special note as rarer winter visitors were an Eastern Phoebe in Region 4; a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Region 2; a Loggerhead Shrike in Region 9; and eight species of warblers, with the best, a record late American Redstart in Region 5, a Yellow-throated Warbler in Region 3, a wintering Black-throated Blue Warbler in Region 4, and a Cape May Warbler in Region 9. Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared in Regions 3 and 9 and Northern Oriole in Regions 3 and 4.

A careful scan of the reports yields the usual notes of personal interest. The following popped out in my reading. A concentration of 17 Pied-billed Grebes was found in Region 1. Wild Turkey numbers continue to grow across the state. A Bald Eagle with a green wing tag was noted in Region 1. In Region 3, the early Pine Grosbeaks were seen to eat partridge berries (That's what they were doing all over the ground in the woods at first!), and later birds were found carefully extracting the seeds from crabapples. Ruffed Grouse and Wild Turkeys were noted feeding on seeds in deer beds in Region 6. In Region 7 a hungry Red-tail caught more than it could handle. Finally, in Region 9, the fall rains refilled the drought-emptied reservoirs at last. Surely any of you can find items that appeal to your own interests.

The rarities are a bit more scattered under the new report format, so gathering the best (not mentioned earlier) of each Region we have:

Region 1—Eared Grebe, Laughing Gull, and Common Black-headed Gull; Region 2—Great Cormorant, Boreal Chickadee, and Yellow-headed Blackbird; Region 3—Varied Thrush; Region 4—Golden Eagle; Region 5—Common Black-headed Gull and Pine Warbler; Region 6—Lesser Black-backed Gull; Region 7—Iceland Gull; and Region 9—Great Cormorant, Golden Eagle, Western Tanager, and Brewer's Blackbird. The BOTS award is a difficult choice this season. In the end it falls equally to the three record-late warblers: Region 4's Black-throated Blue, Region 3's Yellow-throated, and Region 5's American Redstart.

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Standard abbreviations: ad—adult; arr—arrival CBC—Christmas Bird Count; im—immature; max—maximum(a); mob—multiple observers; NYSARC—report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P—Park; SP—State Park; Twn—Township *or* Town of.

## REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

The *Buffalo News* called it . . . “the gloomiest stretch ever in Buffalo, or anywhere in the U.S.” December records at Buffalo showed at least a trace of snow on 29 days, the heaviest occurring from 13 to 19 Dec. It was a month of record snowfall, officially 68.4 inches, mainly due to snow bursts off Lake Erie when the winds were WSW and off Lake Ontario when the winds were from the North. Genesee, Wyoming, southern Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties had much smaller snowfalls. The month’s sunshine total was 10% of the possible. On 2 Dec 50-60 mph winds drove Lake Erie levels to record heights and caused much erosion along the lake shore.

January was relatively mild. Average temperatures were two degrees above normal and an unusual January thaw kept the ground nearly free of snow, except in snow belt areas, from 16 to 26 Jan. Only one inconvenient snow of 3-6 inches occurred on 5 Jan. Total snow for the month was 17.3 inches, seven inches below normal. A peak gust of 53 mph occurred on the 5th. February was still gloomy with about 22% possible sunshine compared to a normal of 38%. There was one major snowstorm of 7 inches at Buffalo on 7 Feb. Peak wind gusts of 40 mph occurred on 15 Feb. Total snow at Buffalo International Airport was 17.3 inches, about normal.

Although the weather was gloomy, temperatures remained relatively mild. The lowest at Buffalo was  $-3^{\circ}$  but  $-20^{\circ}$  at Jamestown and Olean—on 15 Jan. At Belmont in the Genesee Valley the lowest temperature was  $-3^{\circ}$  on 7 Jan. The relatively mild winter produced some interesting records of birds which apparently survived the winter in this rather exposed part of the State, in the lee of Lake Erie and on the High Plateau: a Great Blue Heron in Amity Township on 8 Feb; Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, American Coot, and Tundra Swan at Dunkirk Harbor all winter; a Common Snipe in Chautauqua Co. on 17 Jan, 16 Feb and 22 Feb; and a Hermit Thrush at Lake Erie State Park on 15 Jan (DG). Unusual numbers of American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Field Sparrow were reported as well.

Referring to Dunkirk Harbor in February, Terry Mosher said, “The harbor’s been jumping.” Eight species of gulls there, including Laughing, Iceland and Glaucous, and many interesting waterfowl were reported. Both Glaucous and Iceland Gulls also were reported from the Niagara River through the period but in modest numbers. Both Little Gulls and Lesser Black-backed Gulls were scarcer than in several years. One adult **COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL**, the only true rarity, was seen on the lower river at Lewiston most of December and January. Common Merganser and Mallard were the commonest waterfowl on the annual Waterfowl Census. No rare ducks were seen on the Niagara River.

From Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties people wondered where the Blue Jays had gone. Land birds generally seemed scarce to Terry Mosher and Fran Rew in Chautauqua County. Bob Sundell said that, except for Dunkirk Harbor, birding was mediocre. Vivian Pitzrick said February was a slow month and that no migration had started by the end of the period.

Very poor seed production by trees and shrubs of the Southern Tier counties may have been responsible for the general lack of land birds. Feeders were more attractive to birds than in 1985. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, and Pileated Woodpeckers were all reported at feeders.

Winter finches came into the Region in fair numbers. A few Lapland Longspurs joined the large Snow Bunting flocks. A few Pine Grosbeaks appeared but numbers were nothing like the big flight of 1961, more like 1973. Common Redpolls also came south, but not in the numbers as in the winter of 1976-77. Evening Grosbeaks, those garrulous frequenters of feeders, came to the Southern Tier counties in about normal numbers.

Rare species reported were Eared Grebe, Pomarine Jaeger, Laughing Gull, Black-headed Gull, and Bohemian Waxwing.

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Abbreviations: BOS – Buffalo Ornithological Society, DH – Dunkirk Harbor, FCBC – Fredonia Christmas Bird Count, JCBC – Jamestown Christmas Bird Count, SBCBC – St. Bonaventure Christmas Bird Count, SCBC – Scio Christmas Bird Count.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: last Niagara Falls 14 Dec. Pied-billed Grebe: max 17 DH 26 Jan, unusual concentration. Horned Grebe: max three Ft. Niagara SP 1 Dec. Red-necked Grebe: max three DH 11 Feb. **EARED GREBE**: one DH 8 Dec (DG), about twelfth record for Niagara Frontier. Double-crested Cormorant: last DH 28 Dec. Black-crowned Night-Heron: one DH 8 Jan; one Grand Island 27 Jan. Tundra Swan: max 68 Mayville 6 Dec; one DH entire period, wounded?; arr nine Lakewood 5 Feb (CK). Mute Swan: DH entire period. Snow Goose: one DH after 10 Feb. King Eider: max four mouth Niagara River 1 Dec. Oldsquaw: over 15,000 mouth Niagara River 20 Dec (Bellerby), unprecedented number. White-winged Scoter: max 500 mouth Niagara River 22 Jan. Hooded Merganser: fall concentration decreased to 330 Mayville 8 Dec, and 144 JCBC 22 Dec. Red-breasted Merganser: max 1750 DH 29 Dec. Ruddy Duck: max 95 DH 29 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: one JCBC 22 Dec, late. Bald Eagle: max three JCBC 22 Dec; one adult Salamanca 11 Jan; im with green wing tag Lewiston 12 Jan; two im mouth Niagara River 21 Jan. Killdeer: max three Prendergast Pt 8 Dec; one SBCBC 21 Dec, unusually late. Com. Snipe: three Kiantone 22 Dec. Purple Sandpiper: max four Niagara Falls 1 Dec; one Goat Island 15 Feb. **POMARINE JAEGER**: one Bird Is, Buffalo 2 Jan (AS, RA). Parasitic Jaeger: one adult DH 15 Dec (*vide* RS; TMA, BP). **LAUGHING GULL**: one DH 20-27 Feb (TM), unusual on Great Lakes but increasing.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: arr Wheatfield Twn 5 Jan; one Times Beach, Buffalo 28 Feb, not a flight year! Short-eared Owl: max three Wilson Twn 1 Jan; one Porter Twn 4 Jan, only reports. Red-bellied Woodpecker: singles in three areas frequenting feeders. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one at feeder Lewiston 15-30 Dec, 5-30 Jan (W & HK). Pileated Woodpecker: one Amity Lake 15 Dec, eating sumac (*Rhus typhina*) (VP); also eating sumac brought to feeder (Adams).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: *E. a. alpestris*, max 100 Pomfret Twn 8 Jan; *E. a. praticola*, 10 Pomfret Twn 26 Jan (TM), migrants. Com. Raven: two Vandermark

State Forest 7 Dec (EB); one over Allegany 13 Feb, attacked by pair of crows, circled up and flew S (SE). Am. Robin: max 125 Porter Twn 12 Jan; nine other reports from Region (BOS). Cedar Waxwing: 66 FCBC 21 Dec; 24 Lake Erie SP 15 Jan; three Amity L 28 Feb. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING**: two Porter Twn 1 Dec (Collins), an uncommon winter visitor seen also 27 Nov. N. Shrike: reported from 12 locations in Region during period, a flight year.

**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS**: Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 24 Portland Twn 15 Jan, in two flocks of 10 and 14; one Amity L 6 Jan, unusual away from lake plain in winter; six Portland Twn 16 Feb may have overwintered successfully.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS**: N. Cardinal: 275 JCBC (9.2/person); 68 FCBC (4.8/person); 27 SBCBC (2.7/person); 87 SCBC (2.7/person), illustrates influence of lake plain and large residential areas on presence. Chipping Sparrow: one Pomfret Twn 5 Dec (T & JM) late. Field Sparrow: one Darien 14 Dec to 12 Jan, at feeder; one Belmont 7-25 Feb (D & LB), becoming regular regional winter visitor. Lapland Longspur: max four Pomfret Twn 16 Feb, four other reports from lake plain. Snow Bunting: max 500 Kiantone 14 Feb; 300 Pomfret Twn 16 Feb; 50 Amity Twn 7 Feb; 50 Alfred 8 Feb; many flocks elsewhere, a good flight year. N. Oriole: one Stowe to 13 Dec, at feeder. Pine Grosbeak: max ten Alfred 4 Dec; five other smaller flocks reported in Region during period. House Finch: max 767 JCBC 22 Dec (527 in 1985); 245 FCBC 21 Dec; 33 SBCBC 21 Dec; 225 SCBC, still on increase. Com. Redpoll: max 159 Pomfret Twn 15 Feb, counted with telescope top of large willows (DG, TM); 13 other scattered reports, a fair flight year. Am. Goldfinch: max 55 Lewiston feeder Jan, scarcer than in 1984 and 1985. Evening Grosbeak: 11 reports Feb, 13 reports Jan and seven reports Feb (BOS noteworthy records); 472 JCBC 22 Dec; 145 FCBC 21 Dec; 44 SBCBC, 359 SCBC, most common S of Buffalo.

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## REGION 2 – GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

This winter had a mixed bag of credentials. Weather systems and patterns were not typical and provided some interesting conditions. December blasted us with cold air. The average temperature was 24°, a full 4° below normal. There was snow of course, but the total precipitation was 1.13" below normal at 1.46". January, in contrast, proved to be warmer than usual, with an average temperature of 25°, 1.4° above the norm. Precipitation amounted to 1.63", 0.67" less than the average. Thus continued the dry weather. February's average temperature was very near normal at 24.5°, but precipitation reversed the earlier trend. It measured 2.46", 1.4" above the normal.

The impact of the weather on birding was noticeable in a number of cases. The early cold produced frozen lakes in the southern parts of the Region. This caused waterfowl to concentrate in areas of open water. Overall, the snowfall was insignificant enough to leave feeding areas open and free of deep snow. This may have contributed to the mediocrity which was experienced at feeders. The January and February thaw further contributed to the reduction of ground cover, and also to the opening of water areas late in the season. Lake Ontario had no major ice concentrations along its shore and waterfowl remained spread out along the shore. Only during cold snaps did concentrations occur. A good portion of the Genesee River mouth was open and provided refuge for many ducks and other water birds. Interestingly enough, the weather systems brought us some northern species but deprived us of others.

Ornithologically it was an average winter. Numbers were fairly traditional with no glaring pluses or minuses. Fluctuations from the norm existed, but none seemed to be of overwhelming magnitude. The wild food crop was good. In fact, the lack of significant snow cover along the lakeshore left ample fields with waste grains and weed seeds. Here observers found some concentrations of sparrows and redpolls.

High points of the season include an immature Black-crowned Night-Heron reported in December. This meant that this species was reported during every month of 1985! Wood Duck is not a common species in winter, but this season they were found regularly in Penfield and Webster, with an unprecedented maximum of 24 on 15 Feb. Numbers continually averaged around a dozen. A female King Eider was reported along the East Lakeshore throughout the season. Turkey Vultures put on a winter show with one at Letchworth State Park on 25 Jan and two more reported there on 17 Feb. All three Accipiters were found frequently, and there were over a dozen reports of Northern Goshawk. A half dozen sightings of Merlin included one that wintered in the same location in Livonia. More Little Gulls than usual in winter were along the lakeshore this season. Reports came from all three months, with a maximum of 25 in January and February.

Noteworthy reports of land birds included two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers from Genesee Valley Park and one from Irondequoit. Brown Creeper reports came from numerous locations, and the wintering population seemed to be up a bit. Although its name might imply that it should be present at this time of the year, Winter Wren is an uncommon winter visitor to this Region. It was by no means common this year, but there were fairly many sightings, including two of the three local Christmas Bird Counts. Northern Mockingbird continued to show a rise in population, and multiple sightings were common. Bohemian Waxwings put on an impressive show. All three monthly tallies featured this species, with a maximum of twenty-two along the West Lakeshore. Northern Shrike numbers appeared to be good. They were reported from many locations with sightings of numerous individuals. A phenomenon that repeated again this year was the concentration of Yellow-rumped Warblers in Spencerport. Over 30 were reported from this location. Two real questions remain. On what are they feeding, and why do they concentrate in this one location? Finding the species elsewhere in the Region was a difficult task. Some winter finches appeared in good numbers.

Pine Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls were reported from a number of locations. A staggering total of over 1100 redpolls was reported from Kendall on 7 Dec.

There also were some lows for the season. Although most waterfowl species were present, total numbers generally were low. American Wigeon was noteworthy for its scarcity, and scoters and Oldsquaw were reported in somewhat reduced numbers. Two species that usually winter along the lake shore—Northern Harrier and Short-eared Owl—were down in number. Snowy Owl reports were few and far between, and most of these were second hand. Carolina Wren seems to be a puzzler. Totals seemed to be down, but late season reports may prove to the contrary. Is this due to the increase in activity and singing as spring approaches? In a year when some winter finches were quite numerous, there seemed to be some discrepancies. Pine Siskins were down and both crossbills were in short supply.

There were a few rarities for the season that warrant mention. The immature Great Cormorant that first appeared this fall was again sighted at Charlotte and Irondequoit Bay in Dec, and at Charlotte on 1 Feb. A male Barrow's Goldeneye, along with two females and a probable immature male, was located on the Genesee River at Charlotte on 4 Jan, and several remained through 11 Jan. An immature Red-shouldered Hawk was sighted by Elizabeth Brooks and Jeff Bouton in Retsof on 21 Jan. Winter reports of this species are very unusual. Robert Spahn's report of a Parasitic Jaeger at Braddock Bay on 22 Dec was a first for the Rochester Christmas Bird Count. An immature Common Black-headed Gull was observed flying along the lakeshore in Greece and two reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull, an adult seen in Kendall by T. Bartlett on 28 Dec, and another located on Conesus Lake on 29 Dec by Jeanne Skelly highlight the gull noteworthy reports. Few rare passerines were reported this winter. A Boreal Chickadee appeared in Greece for the Rochester Christmas Bird Count. An adult male Yellow-headed Blackbird frequented the feeder of Bill Smith in Charlotte, and the same bird also was seen in two other locations in that area. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet feasted on suet in the town of Parma at the feeder of Patty Reister from 17 Feb to 28 Feb. It is a very rare winter visitant for this Region. Finally a Chipping Sparrow banded by Elizabeth Brooks in Pittsford on 6 Jan. Records of this species in winter are very unusual.

Contributors: C. Aimsworth; Betty & Martin Baker; Ron & Kay Ballard; John Barna; Maxine Barr; Doug Bassett; Nancy Boudrie; Jeff Bouton; Elizabeth Brooks; Carolyn Cass; Julie Claffey; Jerry Czech; Gertrude Davis; Bob Dobson; Frank Dobson; Jim Doherty; John & Arlieen Foster; Richard Garnham; Kevin Griffith; Tom Griswold; Harriet Hamilton; Øivind Jensen; Polly Keating; Bob & Jane Kesselring; Bob & Charlotte Ladwig; David Levy; Warren Lloyd; Hayward Madden; Bob McKinney; Laura & Neil Moon; Richard O'Hara; Tom Painting; Martha Reinhardt; Patty Reister; Marty Robinson; Ray Robinson; Carole Rowles; Jim Rudman; Pat Scheible; Marge Schmale; Jeanne Skelly; Sharon Skelly; Tom Smith; Robert, Susan, Cathy & Kristin Spahn; Paul Spindler; Ann Stear; Harriet Stride; David Strong; Mary Ann Sunderlin; William Symonds; Steve Taylor; Dave, Mike & Tom Tetlow; Don & Donna Traver; Bruce & Dorothy Watson; Bill Wegman; Eleanor Weld; Paul Weld; Munro Will; LuAnn Williams; Doris Wilton.

Abbreviations: BB – Braddock Bay, CL – Conesus Lake, IB – Irondequoit Bay, LSP – Letchworth State Park, WL – West Lakeshore.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: last one Sodus 12 Jan. Com. Loon: last one Pultneyville 18 Jan. Pied-billed Grebe: max three CL 3 Jan. Double-crested Cormorant: im Charlotte 3 Feb, reported at various times throughout the season. Tundra Swan: max 32 CL 3 Jan. Brant: last BB 11 Jan. Green-winged Teal: last Greece 15 Dec. Am. Wigeon: arr two BB 5 Feb. Surf Scoter: one WL 28 Dec, one Charlotte 5 Jan. Ruddy Duck: max three CL 3 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: ad Hamlin 1 Dec, im WL 7 Dec, ad CL 1 Jan, ad Rush 17 Jan, ad LSP 8 Feb, good number of sightings for the season. Wild Turkey: max 70 LSP 18 Jan, continuing to do well. Virginia Rail: one Greece 22 Dec (AS), one Covington 21 Dec (mobs). Killdeer: one BB 31 Dec; last two Brockport 12 Jan, arr Hamlin 22 Feb. Purple Sandpiper: last BB 1 Dec, last. Dunlin: last 7 BB 1 Dec. Com. Snipe: one Greece 22 Dec. Red Phalarope: last BB 1 Dec (JB, Mike Davids). Iceland Gull: one Webster 13 Dec, 2nd yr; one Charlotte 5, 11 Jan; one BB 11 Jan; im IB 22 Feb; one Sodus 22 Feb; good number for the season. Glaucous Gull: im Webster 12-14 Dec; two WL 12 Jan; one IB 31 Jan; ad Sodus 16 Feb; ad IB 22-23 Feb, about average for the season.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Long-eared Owl: one LSP 27 Feb (DB), first record for the park. Short-eared Owl: one Webster 22 Dec, unusual location; max 14 Retsof 26 Feb, a traditional location. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Penfield 31 Dec, seen only once, other reports of birds through the season.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: E. Bluebird: max 14 Honeoye Lake 29 Dec. Hermit Thrush: one Sodus 12 Jan, one Greece 17 Jan, typical numbers if not a tad low. Gray Catbird: one Greece through the period, one Durand-Eastman Park 4 Dec, one Sodus 26 Jan, more than usual. N. Shrike: max six East Lakeshore 16 Feb.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Orange-crowned Warbler: one BB 1 Dec (JB), one Durand-Eastman Park 7 Dec (JD, RO), unusual species for the season. Yellow-rumped Warbler: singles Mendon 21 Dec, Hamlin 30 Dec, and Williamson 4 Jan, only reports away from Spencerport concentration.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Field Sparrow: one CL 26 Jan, uncommon winter bird. Swamp Sparrow: 22 CL 29 Dec (JB), excellent total for one area. White-crowned Sparrow: eight Hamlin 2 Jan, im Greece 18 & 23 Feb, continuing recent trend of winter reports. Lapland Longspur: max 35 Nations Rd, Avon, 15 Jan. Snow Bunting: max 3000 Kendall 23 Feb. Rusty Blackbird: arr 18 Greece 18 Feb, but a smaller group wintered at this location. Pine Grosbeak: max 35 from various locations. Red Crossbill: singles Durand-Eastman 27 Dec, and Greece 13 Jan, only reports. White-winged Crossbill: max eight Turning Point Pk 24 Dec, 8 Jan; one Webster 20 Feb.

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## REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES

C. K. MELIN

The Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University reported December temperatures averaging three degrees below normal. The early days of the month showed the warmest weather, with temperatures in the 40's and 50's. Strong cold fronts passed through on 2 and 13 December, and the remainder of the month had temperatures below the freezing mark. The first weeks of January remained quite cold, especially between the 7th and the 9th with temperatures zero or less. Beginning around 17 January, however, we had a period of much warmer than normal temperatures which extended into February. Indeed, the coldest temperatures of February were not really very cold compared to long-term averages.

Fruit and cone crops were strikingly different from the 1984-85 season. Overall, food crops of cones and fruits were scanty, in contrast to the abundant supply of food one year ago. Ornamental crabapples were an exception. Their abundant crop of fruits were heavily used by Pine Grosbeak, which would carefully extract seeds from the crabapple pulp. The first Pine Grosbeaks reported this season were observed on the ground eating a scant crop of Partridgeberry. Many observers reported Blue Jay as scarcer than usual, while others reported them as more conspicuous at feeders this year, gorging their crops with seed. Last year's complaints of a lack of Northern Cardinals at feeders eased this year, with many reports of up to a dozen Cardinals per feeder. Could the response of these two species owe to the low mast and seed crop this year? There was little production of cones. Red-breasted Nuthatch reports decreased sharply in December after frequent reports during the fall season. Crossbills and other cone specialists did not remain through the season. Common Redpolls were reported eating goldenrod and other weed seeds.

Among the reports of special interest are: An immature male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, reported throughout November and December at an Ithaca feeder (*fide* McIlroy), was also recorded for the 1 Jan Ithaca CBC and was last seen 23 Jan. A characteristically tame Northern Saw-whet Owl roosted at the Melin & Smith home on Turkey Hill Rd. on 22 Dec. A male **VARIED THRUSH** used a feeder near Slaterville Springs 1 Feb, and was observed several times until 6 Mar. A Gray Catbird using Multiflora Rose for food and shelter in Ithaca on 31 Jan was last seen 15 Feb. A **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** in Ithaca 26 Nov. (*fide* S. Sibley) was last seen 13 Dec. This bird appeared at a feeder during the first freezing temperatures of the winter, using a brushy south-facing slope in the yard for shelter. On 13 Dec, following a week of warmer than normal temperatures, a strong storm arrived and marked a major change in the weather including heavy snow and a significant drop in temperature.

Contributors: Jack Brubaker, Dick Clements, John Confer, Bernice Hilfiker, Polly Keating, Malcolm Lerch, Dorothy McIlroy, Anne Marocchini, C. K. Melin, Mary Welles.

Abbreviations: ECBC – Elmira Christmas Bird Count; ICBC – Ithaca Christmas Bird Count; MCBC – Montezuma Christmas Bird Count; SCBC – Schuyler County Christmas Bird Count; CVCBC – Chemung Valley Audubon Christmas Count.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: four ICBC, two SCBC. Pied-billed Grebe: two ICBC, three SCBC. Horned Grebe: reports scarce all season; one ICBC, three SCBC. Red-necked Grebe: max two ICBC. Double-crested Cormorant: single bird reported at Watkins Glen 4 Feb, a rare report for this season. Great Blue Heron: singles reported all season throughout Region. Tundra Swan: max 70 MNWR 4 Dec. Canada Goose: 275 ICBC, 363 SCBC, 984 MCBC. Wood Duck: one or two males present all season at Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary; no other reports. Green-winged Teal: last 2 Dec. Am. Black Duck: max 346 Cayuga Lake 12 Jan. Mallard: max 945 Cayuga Lake 12 Jan. No. Pintail: male at Union Springs 8 Jan, uncommon winter. Gadwall: present in small numbers all season. Canvasback: max 536 ICBC. Redhead: max 4886 Cayuga Lake 12 Jan. Oldsquaw: conspicuously absent. White-winged Scoter: only three reports. Com. Merganser: max 17 SCBC. Red-breasted Merganser: max 16 MCBC.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: one near Elmira 17 and 22 Dec, (*vide* M. Welles), late. Bald Eagle: Union Springs 8 Jan, in an area of extensive lake ice, open water, and waterfowl concentrations. Bald Eagles have been reported annually in this area since 1983. Red-tailed Hawk: max 70 ICBC. Rough-legged Hawk: max 18 CVCBC. Wild Turkey: increasing throughout Region, frequently reported, max 23 Ithaca NYSEG 16 Jan. Gulls: Ring-billed 230, Herring 344, Great Black-backed 38, all max, from ICBC. "White-winged" gulls: none.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: several reports, max three CVCBC. Great Horned Owl: six ICBC, seven CVCBC. Barred Owl: one report Ithaca 27 Jan. Short-eared Owl: one report Chemung Bridge & Rt. 17 22 Dec. Woodpeckers: Red-bellied 35, Downy 208, Hairy 60, N. Flicker 7, Pileated 11, all max from ICBC.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: max 176 ICBC. Fish Crow: arr Stewart Park 26 Jan. Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 19 ICBC. Carolina Wren: numbers appear to be at a relative high, following several mild winters since 1976-77, widespread, max six ICBC, three SCBC. Golden-crowned Kinglet: frequent fall reports of flocks along with Red-breasted Nuthatch; remained in unusually high numbers all season, max 85 ICBC, including one flock of over a dozen birds. Cedar Waxwing: scattered reports and not seen as regularly as last year, when the fruit crop was abundant and widespread. N. Shrike: total of eight reports from throughout Region.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Am. Tree Sparrow: plentiful throughout Region, max 506 ICBC. Song Sparrow: fewer than usual wintered this year, although widespread in small numbers. White-throated Sparrow: present through Region, max 90 ICBC. White-crowned Sparrow: singles Newark 17 Dec, Ithaca 11 Jan. Lapland Longspur: four reports from throughout Region. Snow Bunting: flocks reported throughout Region, max 400 ICBC. Red-winged Blackbird: present all season in small numbers. Pine Grosbeak: flocks of six to a dozen birds reported by all contributors, max 87 ICBC, 50 Hector Forest 16 Feb. House Finch: numbers leveling off although still abundant, max 1104 ICBC. Com. Redpoll: five reports, max 100 (M. Lerch). Pine Siskin: scattered reports of five or less; none persistent. Evening Grosbeak: reported consistently all season, max 862 ICBC. House Sparrow: reported throughout Region as decreasing and less visible at feeders, but total numbers still substantial; max 1088 ICBC.

84-A Turkey Hill Rd., Ithaca, New York 14850

[On behalf of the Federation, thanks to Dick Clements for the fine job he has done as Region 3 Editor for the past two years – The Editor.]

## REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

JAY G. LEHMAN

In contrast to the mild November, December was colder than normal in Binghamton, with at least fourteen days of below-normal mean temperatures and more snow than last year. The coldest day was 26 Dec with a mean temperature of 4°, 19° below normal, and prompted the weatherman to opine that December had been as cold as a typical January. The cold and snow continued through January but were interrupted by two mild periods. The first was a brisk spring-like Sunday, 12 Jan, with a mean temperature 16° above the norm of 21. The second was a six-day stretch of above-average temperatures in mid-month. These mild periods conveniently came during the waterfowl count period, but were a mixed blessing. They melted all the snow for non-skiers who like to be reminded of spring in mid-winter but surrounded the coldest weather of the season and generated an outbreak of flu and colds. More cold and snow followed, with twelve inches falling at Binghamton from 25 to 27 Jan, and continued through February. By the end of February the season was colder and had fourteen inches more snow than last year. Who's complaining? The ground hog again predicted an early spring, and we might yet catch a glimpse of Halley's Comet!

The 12 species of ducks and geese is the second longest list for this period in eight years. Unusual species are Snow Goose, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Greater Scaup, and Bufflehead. Christmas Bird Count totals were above average for Black Duck, Mallard, and Common Merganser but low for Common Goldeneye except at Cortland. Canada Geese flying northeast at Norwich in mid-January apparently were confused by the thaw. The diversity of waterfowl is partially due to the efforts of eagle counters; however, Bald Eagle numbers are about average for the past five years. Other raptors were more common. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks seem to be increasing due to increased food (birds) at feeders. Mildred Clark saw a "Sharpie" take a Mourning Dove and Starling in Delhi, while Kathryn Wilson observed one take a Blue Jay and devour it in full view in Oneonta. Bob Miller reported that a Cooper's Hawk hit his feeder in Maryland every two to three days in December. Above average Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawk reports in the south near Binghamton-Owego, and the rare **GOLDEN EAGLE** in Vestal Center on 23 Dec (JD) were probably due to a high rodent population there. However, Dave Messineo found rodents scarce and hawks few in South Otselic. Tantalizing reports of Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks were received but are not included, because they are so rare here in the winter that verifying details and confirmation are required.

The heavy, lasting snow cover reduced American Kestrel numbers, and concentrated Wild Turkeys, Horned Larks, and Snow Buntings, and an unusual Lapland Longspur to visible manure spreads. Two female Northern Bobwhites at Johnson City on 27 Feb probably represent hunt club release survivors, first seen as a flock of five in November. A late February Common Snipe at Greene probably is an early migrant. Partially open fresh water for the Cortland Christmas Count yielded a high count of Herring Gulls and our second winter record ever for **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL**, three no less. Proximity to Lake Ontario may

also have been a factor. The usual one or two Snowy Owls were reported. A Northern Saw-whet Owl, the third report in eight years, was found in a Vestal parking lot on 24 Jan by Harriet and Rick Marsi, sent to a rehabilitator, fed, and released about a month later. Hope it survived. This may be the bird suspected of breeding in 1985. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to increase with the usual high count from the south as well as an equal number reported this year from the north in Sherburne. An adult Yellow-bellied Sapsucker photographed in Norwich from mid-December to mid-February is unusual; most prior winter records are from Broome County. Northern Flicker numbers were the lowest in the past four years.

Mildred Clark reported that Blue Jays were fewer than usual in Delhi, and the second lowest total in eight winters confirms this. However, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creeper, and Golden-crowned Kinglet were present in average to above-average numbers. Carolina Wrens again were reported only in the south. A veritable explosion of Tufted Titmice occurred with the highest number in eight years, two times higher than the previous maxima of 1983 and 1985, with record or near record highs on all Christmas Bird Counts. The Eastern Bluebird at Vestal on 19 Feb are fewer reported than usual. Robins ate Mountain Ash berries in Endwell, while Northern Mockingbirds ate barberries in Oneonta in December and hawthorne berries in Johnson City in February. This food source undoubtedly contributed to their average to above-average numbers. Why then were Cedar Waxwings reported in the lowest numbers in eight years? Perhaps they responded to the poor wild food crop. Northern Shrike reports were below average, but larger numbers penetrated into the southern part of the region than in recent years. They were reported by Rita Pantle (*fide* Rick Marsi) to be hunting House Sparrows roosting in multiflora rose tangles.

The most remarkable bird of the season was a **BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** at Betty Kaminsky's feeder in Endwell from two weeks before Thanksgiving until the snowstorm of 14 February. It fed with Cardinals and Chickadees on oil sunflower seeds and peanut hearts in a large redwood bucket but is suspected of supplementing its suet diet with bark insects and those found in the seeds. Margaret Layton, suspecting a Junco, went to see it but confirmed it as "deep blue, beautiful when the sun hit it and the small white [spot] on the wings." An **EASTERN PHOEBE**, the second winter report in the past eight years, also appeared at this feeding station through early February!

Northern Cardinals were more common, started singing earlier, mid-January in Norwich, and also fed young late there in the fall. Is this behavior characteristic of a species expanding its range? House Finch is also expanding its range, and they too started singing in early February in Norwich. Sparrows were well represented with the second highest species list in eight winters. American Tree Sparrow totals were the highest in eight seasons, Dark-eyed Juncos were more common than normal, and an injured Fox Sparrow at Tioga in February is an uncommon find. The Rusty Blackbird on the Sherburne Christmas Bird Count may seem rare here but has been reported in half of the last eight winters.

It was as good a winter finch year as was expected from the indications of

late fall. There were fewer crossbills than last year. Pine Grosbeak reports were the second highest in eight years, and they penetrated into the southern tier, where Harriet Marsi considers it a special treat to have thirteen all season. American Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, and Common Redpolls were more common, but Purple Finch numbers were low. Despite the heavy fall migration of Evening Grosbeaks, the winter population was lower than expected, because they continued into South Carolina. A contributing factor was undoubtedly the poor wild food crop, caused by the low production cycle with last winter's abundance.

The species list of 90 is two higher than the previous eight-year high of 88 in 1984. Golden Eagle, Great Black-backed Gull, Eastern Phoebe, and Black-throated Blue Warbler are rarities. Due to the large number of observers in the field despite the cold weather, most of the high reports are from the Christmas Counts, held on 21, 28, and 29 December and 1 January in Oneonta, Binghamton, Sherburne, Cortland, and Owego (Tioga), respectively. Counts in this season's report are compared to those from the past eight years for perspective. They may not be so exceptional when compared to a longer span of years.

Observers: Judy Bell, Les Bemont, Kelly Belton, Bruce Bozdos, Naturalists Club of Broome County, Sally Carey, Chenango Bird Club, Mildred Clark, Cortland County Bird Club, Chad Covey, Mary Dahn, Anna & Marilyn Davis, Jeff Davis, Jim Davis, Louise Dean, Lori & Bob DeCocker, Ellen Delaney, Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Mary Dobinsky, Sadie Dorber, Polly & Earl Gerkin, Connie Hart, Shirley Hartman, Elma Holway, Olen Houck, Betty Kaminsky, Marion Kitchen, Gail Kirch, Ken Knapp, Bill & Margaret Layton, Christine Leahy, Jay Lehman, Florence Linaberry, Joseph Longtin, Harriet Marsi, Rick Marsi, Stella McPherson, Dave Messineo, Bob Miller, Ron Milliken, Bobbie Monroe, Rita & Bob Pantle, Marilyn Paxhia, Halliday Pierce, Harriet Robinson, Maurice Russell, Nancy Sackett, Jean & Bob Saunders, Steward Stamos, Bernice Stewart, Tioga Bird Club, Bill Toner, George Wade, Kathryn Wilson, Tom & Beryl Wilson, Don Windsor, Crystal Wright, Irene Wright, David Wolman.

Abbreviations: Bing-Binghamton; BCBC-Binghamton Christmas Bird Count; NCBC-Naturalists Club of Broome County; CRes-Cannonsville Reservoir; CCBC-Cortland Christmas Bird Count; End-Endwell; Norw-Norwich; OCBC-Oneonta Christmas Bird Count; OPM-Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; Otse-Otsego; SCBC-Sherburne Christmas Bird Count; TCBC-Tioga Christmas Bird Count; WPres-Whitney Point Reservoir; Vest-Vestal.

LOONS-DUCKS: Great Blue Heron: max five BCBC; a few scattered Jan-Feb reports. Canada Goose: max 50-75 Norw 19 Jan (JL); 45 SCBC, 2nd highest - seven SCBCs; one WPres 8 Feb (A & MD), early. Snow Goose: one WPres 8 Feb (A & MD), early, second winter report in eight years. Green-winged Teal: singles BCBC and Otse L 4 Jan (MD) and three CRes 7 Jan (HM) all very unusual in winter. Am. Black Duck: max 111 CRes 11 Jan (NCBC). Mallard: max 411 BCBC; mid-season max 389 CRes 11 Jan (NCBC). N. Pintail: one BCBC, unusual in winter. Am. Wigeon: one CRes 7 & 11 Jan, unusual in winter. Redhead: eight Otse L 28 Dec (MD) to 4 Jan, number & location unusual. Greater Scaup: female CRes 18 Jan (JL), very unusual in winter. Com. Goldeneye: max 62 CCBC; mid-season max 19 Bing 19 Jan (J & BS). Bufflehead: max six BCBC, where very unusual; scattered small numbers Jan-Feb. Hooded Merganser: max six BCBC & six CCBC; one SCBC, where very unusual. Com. Merganser: max 400 CRes 3 Dec (JD, SS); mid-season max 28 Owego to Nichols 15 Jan (HM, GK).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: max seven (4 im, 3 ad) CRes 25 Jan (RM); last ad CRes 2 Feb (RM). N. Harrier: only one TCBC. Sharp-shinned Hawk: max three BCBC; many

singles widespread, increasing. Cooper's Hawk: max three TCBC, widespread, increasing. N. Goshawk: only one Norw 26 Dec (JL). Red-tailed Hawk: max 19 BCBC and 22 TCBC, max; 12 Tioga 26 Feb (HM, BB, FL), early migrants?; high. Rough-legged Hawk: max 13 BCBC, high; five End 26 Feb (HM, BB, FL), post CBC max. Am. Kestrel: max five BCBC; scarce. Ring-necked Pheasant: max two pairs End 6 Dec; one TCBC, only CBC report, scarce. Ruffed Grouse: max seven BCBC; average counts Jan-Feb. Wild Turkey: max 100 ± Delhi 23 Feb (L & BD); flocks up to 30 widespread throughout, increasing. Ring-billed Gull: 80 ± Otse L 7 Dec to 4 Jan (MD), max and last. Herring Gull: max 83 CCBC, high; few Jan-Feb Susquehanna and Chen R post CBC.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: max 229 OCBC, high; mid-seas max 33-47 daily Delhi Jan. E. Screech Owl: single report Dec; one dead Bainbridge 28 Feb (L & BD), hit house, late-winter movement? Great Horned Owl: mid-seas max 16 BCBC. Snowy Owl: arr Homer 21 Jan (BM); last Smyrna 10 Feb (MR). Belted Kingfisher: max seven BCBC; scattered singles Jan-Feb. Red-bellied Woodpecker: max four SCBC and TCBC. Downy Woodpecker: max 64 BCBC and 59 TCBC, high; mid-seas max nine OPM 1 Feb, above average. Hairy Woodpecker: max 27 OCBC; six OPM 11 Feb (MD, KW), post CBC max; average.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: max 209 SCBC, high; post CBC max 150 Unadilla 27 Feb (MD, KW). Blue Jay: max 202 OCBC; mid-season max 35 OPM 1 Feb (MD, KW) low. Am. Crow: max 686 TCBC and 471 OCBC, high; post CBC max 150 Chen 10 Feb (DW). Black-capped Chickadee: max 513 BCBC, 449 OCBC and 487 TCBC, high; mid-season max 50 OPM 2 Jan & 11 Feb (MD, KW). Tufted Titmouse: max 48 TCBC, 40 BCBC high. Red-breasted Nuthatch: max seven TCBC, high; post CBC max three OPM 1 Feb (MD, KW). White-breasted Nuthatch: max 66 TCBC, high; post CBC max eight OPM 1 Feb (MD, KW). Brown Creeper: max 21 BCBC, high; none after 1 Jan. Carolina Wren: max three BCBC; one daily End Feb, low post CBC. Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 23 BCBC, high; last ten TCBC. Am. Robin: max 12 Vest 12 Feb (HM); scattered widespread reports of one-five. N. Mockingbird: max five BCBC; scattered singles throughout about average. Cedar Waxwing: max 19 Norw 10 Feb (JL), very low. N. Shrike: two BCBC; two TCBC; only reports.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: only one BCBC, second in past 11 BCBCs.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: max 113 TCBC, high. Rufous-sided Towhee: last Tioga Dec (LD). Am. Tree Sparrow: max 246 TCBC and 181 OCBC, high; post CBC max 55 OPM 11 Feb (MD, KW). Chipping Sparrow: last im Chen Forks 8 Dec (A & MD). Song Sparrow: max 13 SCBC; few in Jan-Feb. Swamp Sparrow: two SCBC. White-throated Sparrow: max 32 BCBC; post CBC max three Norw 24 Jan. White-crowned Sparrow: only one Delhi 8-9 Dec daily Feb (SC). Dark-eyed Junco: max 244 TCBC and 120 OCBC, high; average numbers thereafter. Lapland Longspur: one SCBC, scarce in winter. Snow Bunting: max 350 SCBC, 100 BCBC, and 25 OCBC, high. Red-winged Blackbird: max three TCBC; last Tioga Feb. Com. Grackle: two Johnson City off & on Feb (MK), only report. Brown-headed Cowbird: max four TCBC; few singles Bing, Norw, Delhi Feb, post CBC. Pine Grosbeak: max 66 OCBC, 26 BCBC, very high; up to 13-15 scattered Jan-Feb. Purple Finch: max 25 OCBC; few Jan-Feb, scarce. House Finch: max 564 BCBC; 82 OCBC, highest ever; mid-season max 85 Norw 24 Jan (JL); decreasing Feb. White-winged Crossbill: max three OPM 10 Dec still there OCBC; one SCBC. Com. Redpoll: max 88 SCBC and 40 TCBC, high; post CBC max 30 End 24 Jan (FL) and Norw 19-22 Feb (JL). Pine Siskin: CBC max 19 OCBC; many widespread reports 1-9 Jan-Feb, max 100 OPM 1 Feb (MD, KW). Am. Goldfinch: max 145 TCBC and 108 SCBC and OCBC; widespread counts 1-9 Jan-Feb. Evening Grosbeak: max 219 SCBC; mid-season max 80 OPM 22 Jan (MD, KW); widespread counts 5-50 Dec-Feb are below average.

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## REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

PAUL A. DeBENEDICTIS

All contributors agreed that the winter 1985-1986 was best finished and forgotten as quickly as possible. Numbers of birds generally were low, with few rarities to chase, but most observers ended the season with close to normal species lists. Perhaps the weather partly was responsible. All three months averaged just below normal in temperature, without prolonged spells of very cold or unseasonably warm weather. Almost constant overcast conditions continued from last November. Total snowfall was slightly below normal at the season's end. An ice storm in early February marked the disappearance of many half-hardy species from the Region.

The season began with expectations of a good Bohemian Waxwing and winter finch flight. Two Bohemian Waxwing were at Derby Hill on 7 Dec, and another was nearby the next day. Scott Harris found up to 134 near Poland during December and January; Gary Webb saw six there on 23 Feb. Otherwise waxwings of either species were scarce. Winter finches brought similarly mixed findings. Counts of up to 60 Pine Grosbeak per day in December diminished to 20 per day in January and February, but the species remained widespread in the Region. Purple Finch, both crossbills, and Pine Siskin were very scarce. Most reports of Common Redpoll were under 30 per day, and they generally were erratic in appearance but quite widespread. A group of 300 east of Jamesville in February contained a **HOARY REDPOLL**, as did another group of 100 at Dorothy Crumb's home in Pompey at the same time. Lower than average numbers of Evening Grosbeak were reported all winter, with the best numbers in December.

Irruptive raptors remained as scarce as the fall had suggested they would. Only about four Northern Goshawk were reported, and the midwinter maximum for Rough-legged Hawk, seen irregularly all winter, was three. American Kestrels were found more irregularly than in most winters. Few of the rarer owls were reported. In contrast, Northern Shrike were found fairly consistently and at many sites after December, and about seven Bald Eagle, of all age classes and reported from four sites, are about three times normal for this Region. The largest group was three at Cross Lake in early January.

The lack of really cold weather kept water moderately open. Otisco Lake froze after mid-January, but some smaller ponds partially reopened during the late January and mid-February thaws. Most of the ducks that regularly overwinter here were scarcer than normal. An exceptionally good count about 30 of White-winged Scoters arrived in Oswego about 23 Feb; spring migrants are most often found in April. In contrast, several waterfowl which irregularly overwinter here were present this season. A pair of Wood Duck overwintered in Manlius, and two or three more overwintered along the Oswego River. At least six Northern Pintail overwintered at several localities; this species often disappears locally in January. A male Northern Shoveler remained in Manlius after its 18 Jan arrival. There were almost no signs of spring migrant ducks at the season's end.

Other unusual winter waterbird reports included a Red-necked Grebe found in the snow on the Thendara golf course near Old Forge 24 Dec and successfully released on the Big Moose River by Gary Lee. Another late waterbird from the Adirondacks was a Great Blue Heron at Big Moose on 28 Dec. At least one Double-crested Cormorant overwintered at Oswego, about the fourth such Regional record. Very few wintering Killdeer or Common Snipe were found, none persistent. Great Black-backed, Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were present in good numbers, but Ring-billed and Herring Gull numbers were unexceptional; few landfills between Syracuse and Oswego were still operating this season.

Half-hardy landbirds were mixed. Neither Hermit Thrush nor Winter Wren was reported. American Robins were widespread, even on the Lake Ontario plains north of Syracuse, but the highest count was only 104 at Pumpkin Hollow on 18 Jan. The two warblers reported were unexpected species. Most icterids disappeared in January. Sparrows were mixed. American Tree Sparrow were up somewhat in numbers, but once again no wintering Field or Swamp Sparrow were found. The other species were found in fairly typical numbers. Especially notable were single Song and White-crowned Sparrow (the latter for the second consecutive year) that overwintered at feeders on Derby Hill in the heart of the snow belt.

A total of 118 species was reported, about average. The great rarities included Gyrfalcon, Com. Black-headed and Thayer's Gull, Pine Warbler, American Redstart and Hoary Redpoll. Otherwise the season was enriched mainly by an assortment of unseasonable records.

Contributors: Dorothy Crumb, Paul DeBenedictis, Robert L. Evans, Gene Huggins, Ken Karwowski, Jeanne Lally, Gary Lee, Tom Linda, Robert L. Long, Robert E. Post, Thomas M. Riley, Margaret S. Rusk, F. G. Scheider, Gerald A. Smith, Magdalena Stooks, Gary Webb.

Abbreviations: BBFS – Ben Burtt feeder survey; DH – Derby Hill, Oswego Co.; FH – Fairhaven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, Cayuga Co.; LOL – Lake Ontario littoral, Oswego Co.; NPT – northern Pompey township; SSSP – Selkirk Shores State Park, Oswego Co.; Syr – Syracuse.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: last Oswego 19 Jan, late. Com. Loon: at least one apparently overwintered Oswego. Pied-billed Grebe: two or three overwintered Oswego River. Horned Grebe: last LOL 19 Jan. Red-necked Grebe: last four Skaneateles Lake 18 Jan. Great Blue Heron: last Oswego River 19 Jan; arr Oneida 28 Feb. Tundra Swan: four Bridgeport 7-8 Dec only report. Mute Swan: birds on Lyons Pond all pinioned. Canada Goose: migrants past DH to 24 Dec, last Regional counts >100 on 18 Jan. Green-winged Teal: last Otisco L first week of Dec. Am. Black Duck: max 155 mid-Jan, low. Gadwall: to ten per day to 16 Jan, then one Brewerton 7 Feb. Am. Wigeon: last FH 5 Dec. Canvasback: midwinter max 22 Oswego 16 Jan, only two counts >10. Redhead: midwinter counts to six per day Oswego. Ring-necked Duck: two stragglers in Jan, last Phoenix 25 Jan. Greater Scaup: midwinter max 1400 Oswego 1 Feb. Lesser Scaup: midwinter counts to five per day. King Eider: one or two birds Oswego to 15 Feb. Oldsquaw: midwinter max 102 Oswego 16 Jan, next highest count about 30. Surf Scoter: last Oswego 22 Dec. White-winged Scoter: midwinter counts to five per day Oswego. Com. Goldeneye: max 756 Oswego 11 Jan. Bufflehead: midwinter max 100 16 Jan, most counts <40. Hooded Merganser: last 1 Feb. Com. Merganser: max 1100 Oswego 23 Feb, next highest count 400. Red-breasted Merganser: midwinter max 30. Ruddy Duck: last Onon L 21 Dec.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** N. Harrier: last central Oswego 12 Dec, then a male "migrating" by DH 18 Jan. **GYRFALCON:** light bird seen briefly near Bridgeport 21 Dec (*fide* GH, NYSARC). Ring-necked Pheasant: male at feeder in Thendara to 28 Dec, first there in at least 20 years (GL). Am. Coot: last Oswego 22 Dec. Killdeer: one DH 15 Dec, two near Marcellus 3 Jan only reports. Com. Snipe: four DeWitt 23 Feb. Bonaparte's Gull: last LOL 12 Dec. **COM. BLACK-HEADED GULL:** one Oswego 29 Dec (GW, brief description), tenth Regional record. Ring-billed Gull: midwinter max 4400 mid-Jan. Herring Gull: midwinter max 1100 mid-Jan. **THAYER'S GULL:** im Minetto 25 Jan (MSR). Iceland Gull: to seven per day Oswego River. Glaucous Gull: to 12 per day Oswego River. Great Black-backed Gull: record max 635 Oswego 7 Jan (MSR).

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** Snowy Owl: second-hand reports only. Long-eared Owl: two Mattydale 21 Dec (JL) only report. Short-eared Owl: one near Phoenix 8-16 Dec; up to six near Utica 30 Dec-1 Jan only reports. N. Saw-whet Owl: one Nick's Lake 23 Jan, only report. N. Flicker: last 4 Jan, often overwinters.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: to 30 per day midwinter; arr DH 19 Feb. Tufted Titmouse: numbers comparable to recent years, probably increasing slowly. Red-breasted Nuthatch: one or two per day midwinter. Brown Creeper: one or two per day through Jan, none in Feb. Carolina Wren: two or three at feeders in Syr and DeWitt. Golden-crowned Kinglet: to five per day, including one Old Forge 28 Feb. E. Bluebird: arr seven Pompey 23 Feb.

**VIREOS-WARBLED:** **PINE WARBLER:** one at feeder near Bridgeport 30 Nov-15 Dec (BBFS, ph), third Regional winter record. **AM. REDSTART:** im male at feeder N. Syr first week of Jan (BBFS, ph), record late and first for winter period.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** Rufous-sided Towhee: male overwintered DeWitt. Am. Tree Sparrow: somewhat better numbers than recent winters. Swamp Sparrow: last near Marcellus 3 Jan. White-throated Sparrow: small numbers only overwinter. Dark-eyed Junco: midwinter max ten per day. Lapland Longspur: one DH 2 Jan only report. Snow Bunting: midwinter max 250 mid-Jan. E. Meadowlark: one near Phoenix 3 Jan, only report. Red-winged Blackbird: last Skaneateles Lake 18 Jan. Com. Grackle: last three Liverpool 30 Jan. Brown-headed Cowbird: last 30 Jan, usually overwinters here. Purple Finch: only two reports, last Howland's Island 1 Jan. Red Crossbill: six SSSP 10 Dec, seven 20 Feb, only reports. White-winged Crossbill: three at a Fayetteville feeder in Jan; 2 SSSP 20 Feb, only reports. Pine Siskin: only two singles reported, last 3 Jan.

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## REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL AND GERALD A. SMITH

December was decidedly cold and snowy, but the remainder of the winter was unremarkable. Mean December temperatures were about three degrees below normal, but the snowfall was extraordinary. Even areas beyond the lake effect zone had 50% more snow than usual. Total snowfall for the period ranged from 75 in. at Canton to 185 in. on Tug Hill. Although January temperatures were slightly above normal, ice formation in the St. Lawrence River was two weeks earlier than last year. Heavy rain fell during a marked thaw 17 to 20 Jan, when the mercury reached 52. February was colder than normal and on the dry side. A thaw the end of the third week sent temperatures well into the 40's and brought chipmunks out of dormancy.

Was the prolonged cold and heavy snowfall the reason for some raptors being up and others down? The deep snow cover may have been responsible for Northern Harrier being scarce. None were reported from their usual wintering area on Pt. Peninsula, and the last of four reports totaling six individuals came in mid-January. Rough-legged Hawk was scarce for the second consecutive winter, the maximum being six along Rt. 81 between exits 47 and 50, Jefferson Co., on 9 Feb. It was virtually absent from many sectors, including traditional concentration areas in nw Jefferson Co. Am. Kestrel also was very scarce. The high count was two in Henderson on 11 Jan, and only four others were reported. There were only three reports of Snowy Owl, two unconfirmed. A Barred Owl hunting in daylight 4:00 PM outside Canton on 2 Jan reflects a hard winter. Another was a roadkill near Massena on 16 Jan (spm SLU). Buteos often are scarce in central St. Lawrence Co. during the period of heaviest snow cover. However, the scarcity of Rough-legged Hawk and Snowy Owl may owe to a good lemming year in the Arctic.

In contrast, an unusually many Accipiters and shrikes were reported at feeders. A total of 15 Sharp-shinned Hawk was reported with a maximum of three on the MCBC. Seventeen Cooper's Hawk was reported, the most at a time three on the TICBC. A total of 20 Northern Shrike was reported, with five found on two CBCs.

Extraordinary numbers of Bald Eagle wintered on the St. Lawrence River between Chippewa Pt., Hammond and Brockville, Ont. At least four birds wintered here for most of January and February. A maximum of 18 birds, including nine adults, one near adult, six subadults and two immatures, were recorded 16 Jan by Gerry Smith. Eagle counts on the St. Lawrence have been increasing for the past three years. This is the second largest wintering population in the state.

Other birds found during this period in the open water pools on this stretch of the St. Lawrence River included daily counts of 700-1200 Common Goldeneye and 3000-5000 Common Merganser. Unexpectedly, the 1-3 Glaucous Gulls were outnumbered by the 6-12 Iceland Gulls seen on most visits.

This was a banner year for Bohemian Waxwing and the best since 1981 for winter finches. There were 1302 Bohemian Waxwing reported. The maximum was 400 at Brasher Falls on 2 Feb (P. Kelly). Only 751 Cedar Waxwing were reported. Pine Grosbeak was reported through the period with an all-time record of 269 on MCBC. About 400 Com. Redpoll were tallied on MCBC, and single sightings of 1-200 were reported elsewhere. As many as five Hoary Redpoll were present at Mildred and Everett Howard's feeder in Canton in February; one which struck a window was confirmed (spm SLU). Pine Siskin was frequent in December, the best count 30 at Joe VanRiet's feeder in Massena on 2 Dec, but none were reported in January or February. Am. Tree Sparrow was unusually abundant with a max of 476 on TICBC. It was only a fair year for Snow Bunting, but TICBC reported eight Lapland Longspur.

Several species continue to expand their populations in the North Country. A Red-bellied Woodpecker at Tucker Terrace in Massena was new to the MCBC and the third confirmed sighting for St. Lawrence Co. One Tufted Titmouse was a new species for the TICC and one daily 13 Jan to 22 Feb at Bob and June Walker's feeder on Dry Hill, Watertown was new for that area, while Chamberlaine found two as usual in Henderson. Numbers of N. Cardinal are up on all CBCs and in outlying towns. House Finch out-numbered Purple Finch 95:6 on the MCBC. Lee Chamberlaine reports 30 per day at Henderson with a max of 60 on 15 Dec.

Peter O'Shea reports five Ruffed Grouse feeding on bare ground of deer beds in Colton 28 Feb, and five Wild Turkey feeding similarly as well as on heavily budding on Red Maple in boreal habitat near Cranberry Lake 10 Jan.

Rarities include Harlequin Duck, Thayer's and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and Hoary Redpoll. Clearly out-of-season was a Gray Catbird at Richard Brouse's Watertown feeder on 28 Dec. Half-hardy species on the TICBC included two Belted Kingfisher, three N. Flicker, one White-crowned Sparrow, three Com. Grackle and four Brown-headed Cowbird. WCBC had a Song Sparrow. On the negative side, there were no reports of loons, pelagics or unusual raptors. All told, 18 species of waterfowl, 11 raptors and 43 passerines for a total of 90 species were reported.

Contributors: Marilyn Badger, R. Bracken, Richard Brouse, Sheila & Bob Cerwonka, Lee Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, Stephanie DeGhett, C. Gaskel, Mark Gawn, John Green, Mildred & Everett Howard, Paul Kelly, Peter O'Shea, B. Penney, Fiona Reed, Gerald Smith, Joe VanRiet, Bob & June Walker, Brian Watson.

Abbreviations: Hen – Henderson, MCBC – Massena CBC, MSD – Moses-Saunders Dam, SLR – St. Lawrence R, SLU – St. Lawrence University; TICBC – Thousand Islands CBC, WCBC – Watertown CBC.

LOONS-DUCKS: Great Blue Heron: one TICBC only report. Canada Goose: max 300 on 8 Dec, 20-40/day scattered to early Jan, none thereafter. Wood Duck: singles WCBC and TICBC; two Hen Pd thru period (LBC) are even more extraordinary given the severe winter. Am. Black Duck: max 200 MCBC, numbers much lower on other CBCs; scarce in Jan and Feb except 40 Jefferson Park, Town of Ellisburg 13 Feb; 13 wintering in open water near American I, SLR, are unusual. Mallard: max 150 MCBC. N. Pintail: two MCBC only report. Gadwall: eight MCBC and two-three near MSD to 25 Dec (MB) only reports. Canvasback: 20 TICBC only report. Redhead: four TICBC only report. Greater

Scaup: max 100 Pt. Peninsula area 31 Dec. Lesser Scaup: one MCBC only report. **HARLEQUIN DUCK**: im male Hawkins Pt, SLR near MSD 11-12 Jan (JVR), first StLa record. Oldsquaw: max 300+ Stony Pt area. Com. Goldeneye: max 3500 MCBC. Barrow's Goldeneye: pair MCBC (JVR), one or two females Hawkins Pt near MSD 18 Jan-2 Feb. Bufflehead: pair MCBC to 18 Jan, seven TICBC and female near American I, SLR, Jan only reports. Com. Merganser: max 10,000 MCBC. Red-breasted Merganser: max 11 MCBC, unreported after Dec.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS**: Red-tailed Hawk: max 20 along Rt. 81 between exits 47 and 50, Jeff, 9 Feb (GAS); good numbers on all CBCs; most counts one to four per day from lowland sectors. Gray Partridge: numbers up Jeff and StLa along SLR; max 24 TICBC and 15 Hen 25 Dec (LBC). Ring-necked Pheasant: still scarce, max six WCBC, otherwise singles only. Ruffed Grouse: max 21 TICBC. Wild Turkey: increasing Jeff, max 19 TICBC; other good counts include nine Theresa-Redwood 8 Feb (LBC) and nine Pierrepont 4 Jan (KC). Ring-billed Gull: max 120 MSD 21 Dec, virtually absent after late Dec. Herring Gull: max 2000 MCBC. **THAYER'S GULL**: ad MCBC at MSD (JVR, BP, RB, CG, MG). Iceland Gull: max 25 MCBC. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: ad MCBC at MSD (JVR, BP, RB, CG, MG). Glaucous Gull: max 10 MCBC; only 1-3 per day open water pools SLR Jan-early Feb. Great Black-backed Gull: max 500 MCBC.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS**: Mourning Dove: widely reported through period; max 83 TICBC. E. Screech Owl: one TICBC; one Massena 31 Dec; one found in a closed barn in Henderson 13 Feb attempted to catch birds on feeding platform on release. Great Horned Owl: one hooting Pierrepont 4:00 AM 9 Dec; two hooting Morely 3 Feb; seven others reported. Downy Woodpecker and Hairy Woodpecker: ratio for all reports 101:64. N. Flicker: three TICBC. Pileated Woodpecker: 15 total, max nine TICBC.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS**: Com. Crow: wintered in Fine and Star Lake for second year (PO's); seemed unusually numerous near Canton with roosts of 150-200 observed 4 and 9 Jan. Boreal Chickadee: one TICBC was out of nesting range. Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 17 MCBC.

**VIREOS-WARBLED**: none.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS**: Song Sparrow: one WCBC. White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco and Brown-headed Cowbird were reported by all three CBC's. Red Crossbill: just one on TICBC and MCBC.

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GAS—DHBO, Sage Creek Rd., Mexico, New York 13114

## REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M. C. PETERSON

Seasonal weather over the four northeastern counties stayed quite close to long-term averages for snowfall, temperatures, and heating degree-days. Holding to these averages, however, required that birds and birders endure several brutal bouts. An Alberta Clipper cold snap sent the windchill to  $-60^{\circ}\text{F}$  in the Adirondacks on 18 Dec. On the following day the air temperature was still  $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$  in Ellenburg Depot. Conditions were about average for the four Christmas counts. The 21 Dec Ferrisburg, VT/NY Christmas Bird Count (hereafter FCBC) enjoyed snow cover of only 1-5 in. and L. Champlain was open. The Elizabethtown count (ECBC) on 28 Dec saw ideal conditions of  $10^{\circ}$ - $20^{\circ}\text{F}$  temperatures and 4-14 in. snow cover, and conditions were similar on Plattsburgh's count (PCBC) the following day. By 28 Dec the snow at Saranac Lake (SLCBC) was 16-20 in. deep and fresh water was mostly frozen.

The counts completed, a snowstorm on 5 Jan was followed by severe cold. This combination of conditions forced a Red-tailed Hawk to make a near-fatal mistake. The emaciated raptor struck a domestic duck, part of a small flock on a frozen residential pond near Westport. Locked in a struggle that proved fatal for the duck, the two tumbled into a tiny patch of open water. The raptor survived the plunge and struggled out, but almost immediately iced up. It was badly hypothermic when picked up by the High Peaks Audubon rehabilitation team on 8 Jan. Drs. Robert Lopez and Craig and Suzanne Russell applied heat and fluid therapy to stabilize the hawk, followed by a diet of mice donated by Trudeau Institute.

Open water could still be found along portions of L. Champlain, the LaChute R. at Ticonderoga, a bit of the St. Lawrence R. on the St. Regis Reservation, and Seventh Lake in Hamilton Co. for the 12 Jan NYS Waterfowl Count. Observers tallied 2,877 individuals, representing 14 waterfowl species plus a hybrid. They also counted an incredible 195 Great Black-backed Gulls (35 on L. Champlain, 160 on the short stretch of the St. Lawrence). Temperatures plummeted soon after the waterfowl count. Saranac Lake was the coldest spot in the nation at  $-24^{\circ}\text{F}$  on 14 Jan, according to the Today Show, but that same day the Atmospheric Science Research Center recorded  $-25^{\circ}\text{F}$  along the Ausable R. Thermometers registered  $-19^{\circ}\text{F}$  at Ray Brook on 15 Jan, yet even with temperatures rising Saranac Lake claimed the low in the nation of  $-14^{\circ}\text{F}$  on 16 Jan. Daytime temperatures finally climbed above zero, and on 19 Jan the rehabilitated Red-tailed Hawk was banded and released. The greatest storm of the season began 25 Jan, with 17 in. of snow in Plattsburgh and 21 in. in the Tri-Lakes by the following day. The storm continued, adding another foot of snow by 27 Jan. Birds began to be pushed into view of window-watchers: 20 American Goldfinches, for example, appeared at an Elizabethtown feeder 29 Jan, followed by an adult Northern Shrike on the last day of the month. Common Redpolls, which had been present since late Oct, began to appear at more feeders, but in modest numbers and only briefly; only eight redpolls could be banded near Elizabethtown 7-8 Feb.

February had no real extremes of weather, although temperatures dropped again at mid-month, providing a low of  $-7^{\circ}$  F at Elizabethtown on 12 Feb.

A seasonal total of 88 species was reported, down from 96 during last winter's bumper food crop. Only 27 birds of just five species were banded near Elizabethtown during the season. Christmas count totals ranged from lows of 36 species at Elizabethtown and just 1,568 individuals at Saranac Lake to record highs of 57 species and 6,491 individuals at Plattsburgh, reflecting the tendency of birds to concentrate at lower elevations. Birding was poorest in forested areas at higher elevations. Bob McKinney found the northern finches around his Cedar R. camp in Hamilton Co. "as amazingly poor as they were amazingly good last year," spotting only a dozen Evening Grosbeaks in three days. Near Inlet, Gary Lee saw only a dozen Evening Grosbeaks all winter until a large group moved in during Feb, about the same time as some Blue Jays. From Tupper Lake, Charlie Delehanty reported that the arrival of redpolls in early Feb energized feeding stations, but that many still had no birds, not even a jay, by the close of the season; even her Sharp-shinned Hawk departed for the first time in three or four winters!

This reflects the wild food crop, which was judged poor to fair overall. Yet a good crop of staghorn sumac at lower elevations, augmented by a fair crop of buckthorn berries and wild grapes, attracted numbers of Bohemian Waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks—both species scarce during the previous winter. The Bohemian invasion, which had begun in early Nov, provided Christmas count totals of 1 ECBC, 11 SLCBC, and 32 PCBC. There were also 50 Bohemians at L. Alice 22 Dec, 15 at Tupper L. 2 Jan, flocks of 100 to 220 that delighted visiting birders near Port Douglas between 12 Jan-18 Feb, and ten along the Little Chazy R. on 23 Feb. Cedar Waxwings, so abundant the previous winter, were more difficult to find, with a flock of about 25 the seasonal maximum. Pine Grosbeaks were recorded on all four Christmas counts: 32 FCBC, 41 ECBC, 41 PCBC, and 46 SLCBC. The seasonal maximum was 100-150 seen on 1 Feb by the visiting Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. At Tupper L, where wild foods were scarce, they fed on highbush cranberry in December and sunflower seeds at a feeding station during January.

Other species in better than average numbers included Am. Tree Sparrow (max. 226 PCBC); four reports of Lapland Longspur (with max. 5 in n. Clinton Co. 20-23 Feb); Snow Buntings on three Christmas counts (and max. 300 in n. Clinton Co. 20 Feb); a total of 14 Com. Grackles on all four Christmas counts (max 6 PCBC) plus one at the Inlet dump to mid-Jan and one at a Tupper L feeder in February, and Common Redpolls on four counts (max 113 ECBC). Note that except for the half-hardy grackles, all are fine seed eaters. Yet even forested Hamilton Co. reported Snow Buntings, with four wintering at an Inlet horse corral and six feeding on bird seed spread on the ground at a house next to L. Abanake.

A first-winter male **HARLEQUIN DUCK** was found at Essex harbor on the 12 Jan NYS Waterfowl Count by Ted Mack and Mike Peterson, and was subsequently seen by many observers. Although there are six previous records from the Vermont side of Champlain, dating back to 1929, this is the first in New York waters and constitutes a first record for Essex Co. and the Adirondack-Champlain

Region. The drake was last seen on 22 Jan by Norman Mason and Mike Peterson, and details have been submitted to NYSARC, together with photos by Gerard Lemmo. No details accompanied the report of a putative Broad-winged Hawk eyeing a feeder near Bluff Point during the PCBC. Geoffrey Carleton found a first-winter **ICELAND GULL** at Westport 5 Jan for a sixth Essex Co. record; Jeff also found the first for the county in 1937. A Common Barn-Owl was reported at Cumberland Head on the PCBC, but without details. No reports of Spruce Grouse or Wild Turkey were received, and local outdoor columnist Marty Rosenkranz writes that results of the first regional turkey season in 1985 were disappointing, perhaps due in part to poaching. Northern raptors were either scarce (Rough-legged Hawk, Snowy Owl, Northern Shrike) or absent this winter. Two of the 400 Canada Geese at Pt. au Roche 12 Jan wore yellow neck-collars, according to Mark Gretch.

Contributors: Merry Baker, Geoffrey Carleton, Ann & Walter Chapman, Glen & Malinda Chapman, Janet Chapman, Dewey & Joan Clark, Jim & Linda Cunningham, Charlie Delehanty, John D. Delehanty, John E. Delehanty, George Dill, Susie Frenette, Emily & Jack Geddes, Mark Gretch, Elsbeth Johnson, Bruce Landon, Gary Lee, William Lee, Theodore Mack, Larry Master, Robert McKinney, Susan Millar, Ron Miner, Toni O'Bryan, John Parke, John Peterson, Alan Pistorius, Martin Roddy, David Rutkowski, Arman Vaillancourt, Hollis White, and all of the Christmas Bird Counters.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** Com. Loon: max 3 FCBC. Horned Grebe: max 13 PCBC. Great Blue Heron: max 3 PCBC. Canada Goose: 436 NYSWC, but a flock over Keene Valley 7:30 p.m. 28 Jan took three min. to pass and was estimated at "a couple thousand" geese (RM). Wood Duck: LaChute R NYSWC only report. Am. Black Duck: max 346 NYSWC. Mallard: max 400 NYSWC. N. Pintail: 2 drakes, 1 hen Port Douglas NYSWC, late. Canvasback: max 505 PCBC, last 40 Plattsburgh 15 Feb (MG). Ring-necked Duck: drake Westport 23 Dec only report. Greater Scaup: max 500 PCBC. Com. Goldeneye: max 1,385 NYSWC. Bufflehead: max 16 NYSWC. Hooded Merganser: max 4 L Alice 8 Dec. Com. Merganser: max 1,000 Westport 4 Jan (EJ, JP).

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** Bald Eagle: ad Meacham L 26 Dec (BL), ad Wickham Marsh 12 Jan (MG), subad Bay Pd 19 Jan (MR), Tupper L 20 Jan (CD) all encouraging. Red-tailed Hawk: ad shot Clintonville Feb, taken to Westport for rehabilitation. Am. Kestrel: 1 PCBC only report. Gray Partridge: max 12 (2 flocks, 6 each) n. Clin 20 Feb feeding, then disappearing *under* snow (D & JC). Ruffed Grouse: max 5 ECBC. Am. Coot: 1 PCBC unusual. Bonaparte's Gull: max 28 Westport 5 Jan. Ring-billed Gull: max 448 PCBC. Herring Gull: max 89 PCBC, arr Fourth L 14 Jan, staying several days (GL).

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** Rock Dove: max 417 PCBC. Mourning Dove: max 149 PCBC, 1 caught by cat Westport rehabilitated and released 18 Jan. E. Screech-Owl: gray-phase in waterfowl nesting box Little Chazy R 17 Feb (MG). Great Horned Owl: max 6 ECBC. Snowy Owl: second-hand reports Crown Pt Jan and 2 killed by buses on Northway. Barred Owl: bird trapped 28 Nov died 13 Dec of infection. N. Saw-whet Owl: 1 ECBC only report. Downy Woodpecker: max 29 ECBC. Hairy Woodpecker: max 18 SLCBC. Three-toed Woodpecker: 1 SLCBC only report. Black-backed Woodpecker: Red R, Hami only report. N. Flicker: 3 n Fran only report (HW). Pileated Woodpecker: max 7 PCBC.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: max 125 n Clin 23 Feb (MG). Gray Jay: 2 SLCBC, good population Moose R Plains (GL). Blue Jay: max 300 ECBC, mate-feeding Tupper L 16 Feb. Am. Crow: max 384 ECBC. Com. Raven: max 15 SLCBC, 1 PCBC a first record, and 10 squabbling over carrion in Raquette R marsh 27 Dec (CD). Black-cap-

ped Chickadee: max 626 ECBC. Boreal Chickadee: max 3 SLCBC, 2 Newcomb feeder entire for *sixth* consecutive winter (A & WC). Tufted Titmouse: 2 reports Champlain Valley, low. Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 66 SLCBC. White-breasted Nuthatch: max 31 ECBC. Brown Creeper: max 8 PCBC. Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 17 ECBC. E. Bluebird: 4 males Essex 23 Dec, 2 males, 1 female Westport 18 Jan, and several Essex 10 Feb, late. Am. Robin: max 30 n Fran 12 Jan (HW). N. Mockingbird: Ticonderoga 15 Jan only report. N. Shrike: 6 reports. Eur. Starling: max 581 PCBC.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: Elizabethtown 3 Dec late (JP).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: max 23 PCBC, 2 females wintered Inlet, Hami. Fox Sparrow: 1 PCBC unusual. Song Sparrow: max 6 PCBC. White-throated Sparrow: max 2 SLCBC. Dark-eyed Junco: max 101 PCBC. Red-winged Blackbird: max 5 PCBC. Rusty Blackbird: Tupper L feeder 1-29 Dec late (CD, JDD, JED). Purple Finch: max 44 PCBC. House Finch: max 202 PCBC. Red Crossbill: max 35 PCBC. White-winged Crossbill: max 8 ECBC. Pine Siskin: max 48 PCBC. Am. Goldfinch: max 136 PCBC. Evening Grosbeak: max 331 ECBC. House Sparrow: max 259 PCBC.

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There is no Region 8 report because we have no Region 8 Editor.

## REGION 9 – DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

Although there were a few very cold days this winter, there were no extremely cold or warm periods of any duration. The Hudson River never froze solid in the Region, although much floe ice drifted down from farther north. On occasion ice jams formed at bends where the river courses through the Highlands, but there were many open places where Common Merganser and Canvasback could dive for food. The floes had melted pretty well by mid-February, and only the deepest lakes and reservoirs had ice at the end of the period. Snows came once or twice a week but were of little depth, less than four inches at any one time. Melt and runoff occurred throughout the period. By its end, the drought of the last several years was over. Reservoirs which had been empty seas of grass at the start of the period were now filled and flooding through their spillways.

Although there were signs last fall of an invasion of northern visitors, they failed to show in the hoped for numbers. Every species was reported but mostly in singles and small flocks. Four Pine Grosbeak on the Rockland CBC were the only report away from the northern counties, and the best count was 22 at Lock Sheldrake on 8 Dec. Purple Finch was scarce, with widely scattered reports of one or two birds, mostly at feeders. The only reports of Red Crossbill were six at Butler Sanctuary on 20 Dec and 12 at Purdy's Station on 10 Jan. Even fewer White-winged Crossbill were found: one at Croton Point 22 Jan, three at Rhinecliff on 11 Jan and three females in Dutchess Co. on 18 Jan. The very few reports of Pine Siskin included two in Wurtsboro in early December, several at a Monroe feeder for much of the period, and the maximum a flock of 30-40 at Monticello on 16 Feb. Evening Grosbeak was reported often early in the season but were scattered and scarce at the end. The best count was 85 at Hankins, Sullivan Co., during February.

The 32nd Federation Waterfowl Count from 11-19 Jan produced 18,031 birds of 21 species, only a thousand less than last year's all time high. The majority were the 9,278 Canada Geese, only 2,000 less than last year's record count. Eight thousand of these were in the shallows along the Hudson River or feeding in nearby corn fields. Mute Swan hit an all time high of 316, double last year's count and three times that of the year before. Mallard and Am. Black Duck were scarcer than last year, but still plentiful at 2,595 and 427, their usual ratio. Nine Gadwall, the same as last year, were good considering that they were first reported in 1979. The 3,585 Canvasback were almost four times the total from each of the past two years. Eighty-six Bufflehead was a good total, many times the average, and Common Merganser, although well below the highs of the past two years, also was well above average.

Raptors made an excellent showing this winter. A good birder easily could find 20-30 Red-tailed Hawk and a half dozen Rough-legged Hawk in a full day of birding in the farm lands of the Region. The Mearns CBC in eastern Orange Co. produced a whopping 105 Red-tails on 21 Dec, while the Rockland CBC had a new high of 48, an excellent number for suburbia. Northern Harrier also worked the farms and pastures in excellent numbers by day. They were replaced by good numbers of Short-eared Owls at night, including four along Purgatory Road, Hamptonburgh, all period and one over Warren Sod Farm on 4 Jan. Six at the Galeville Airport on 19 Jan had increased to 11 by 23 Feb.

This was the best winter yet for Bald Eagle. Lois Bautz of the DEC reported 58 birds (39 adults and 19 immatures) wintering in Ulster, Sullivan and Orange Cos. On 9 Jan the Keys observed two at Mongaup, 21 at Rio and two more at Rondout for a total of 25. At least five wintered near Iona Island. There were many reports of single birds throughout the Region.

Northern Cardinal did well in the southern part of the Region, with 188 on the Mearns CBC and 199 on the Rockland CBC. White-crowned Sparrow was present in astounding numbers. Nine on the Warwick Valley CBC increased to 29 by 9 Jan and remained there in a small group through February on a farm along Upper Wisner Road, Warwick. Six were in Dover 31 Jan. Information from eight CBCs is found within the report.

Among the rarities for the period are: Great Cormorant, Tundra Swan, Greater White-fronted Goose, Surf Scoter, Golden Eagle, Iceland and Glaucous Gull, Varied Thrush, Northern and Loggerhead Shrike, Cape May Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Western Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Vesper Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, Brewer's Blackbird and Northern Oriole.

Contributors: Fred & Wava Abbott, John Askildsen, Al Brayton, Frank Brown, Judy Cinquina, Bill Cox, Robert F. Deed, Stan DeOrsey, Peter Derven, Valerie Freer, Carol Jack, Alice Jones, Jim & Mary Key, Jed Kiel, Marbara Michelin, Ed & Lana Mills, Victor Schwartz, Bob Slechts, Selden Spencer, Robert Terwilliger, John Tramontano, Ed Treacy, John & Barbara Voigt.

Abbreviations: BCBC – Burrough CBC Ulst 21 Dec; MCBC – Mearns CBC Oran 21 Dec; PeCBC – Peekskill CBC 21 Dec; PuCBC – Putnam CBC 4 Jan; RCBC – Rockland CBC 22 Dec; SCBC – Sullivan CBC 28 Dec; WCBC – Waterman CBC 27 Dec; WVCBC – Warwick Valley CBC 29 Dec.

**LOONS-DUCKS: RED-THROATED LOON:** one at Croton Pt 14 Dec (JK), always rare in winter. Pied-billed Grebe: singles Iona Is 29 Dec, Danskammer 24 Jan, only two on Federation Waterfowl Count. **GREAT CORMORANT:** im at Rockland L Landing on the Hudson 24 Dec, sixth Rock record; all previous records were Oct or Nov (PD). Great Blue Heron: WCBC had its second record in 28 counts. **TUNDRA SWAN:** one New Croton Falls Dam 4 Jan (JA). **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** two on Sylvan L Dutc 27 Dec reappeared on 10-12 Feb (AJ, JMK). Snow Goose: 17 N Clarkstown 22 Dec was the sixth RBCBC record; singles were at Rondout Res 27-30 Dec, Rhinecliff in Jan and Sylvan L Dutc 10 Feb. Canada Goose: a new high of 3,115 on RCBC. N. Pintail: overwintered on Rio Res, Sull, always unusual in winter. Blue-winged Teal: last Wappingers L 7 Dec. Am. Wigeon: one at Stissing Dutc 28-30 Jan, an unusual late winter record. Canvasback: more than a thousand at Stony Pt on 30 Dec. Redhead: five on the Hudson at Peekskill 21 Dec (Henry Turner). Ring-necked Duck: 150+ on Kenozia L, 1 Dec, was an excellent number for so far north; over 50 Sylvan L 27-28 Feb coincident with thaw. **SURF SCOTER:** imm on Hunn's L Dutc 10-12 Dec, first Dutc winter report in eight years. Com. Goldeneye: 50+ on L Kenozia 1 Dec, while 16 on MCBC was a record high. Bufflehead: max 2550 on Cornwall Bay 21 Dec. Hooded Merganser: 110 on PuCBC was an excellent number.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** Turkey Vulture: one in T of Ramapo 22 Dec, first in 38 RCBCs; reported every month across the northern counties. Accipiters: more reports of all three species than usual, many working bird feeders. Red-tailed Hawk: an all white bird wintered along the Palisades Parkway between Exits 10-12 (mob). **GOLDEN EAGLE:** ad Rio all winter; another ad Constitution I 7 Dec. Am. Kestrel: numbers continue low. **PEREGRINE FALCON:** one at the Tappan Zee Br persisted thru the period, another seen regularly along Purgatory Rd in Hamptonburgh. Ring-necked Pheasant: small numbers in the Warwick Valley all period, up to 18 Dutc in Feb. Wild Turkey: continues in good numbers, three flocks of 14-27 Dutc in Dec. Killdeer: none in Jan, but four in Dutc dur Feb. **ICELAND GULL:** singles (second yr bird) at West Nyack Dump 22 Dec (PD), West Haverstraw Dump 16 Jan, and T of Ulster landfill for more than a month in mid-period (RT). **GLAUCOUS GULL:** one T of Ulster landfill in Jan (RT).

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** Mourning Dove: high on most CBCs; MCBC had 1,073. E. Screech-Owl: at least six reports from Dutc in Jan; PuCBC had 18 and PeCBC had 46. Great Horned Owl: started calling dur Dec in Dutc; nine on PeCBC was excellent. **SNOWY OWL:** only report one 5 Dec at Ashokan (RT). Long-eared Owl: singles Sauger-ties 3 Jan and another heard at Westmoreland Sanct 31 Dec; two more heard in the Peekskill area 21 Dec, scarce in recent years. N. Saw-whet Owl: one standing on a feeder at Wappingers Falls 17 Feb; three wintered at Brinton Brook Sanct, Croton on Hudson.

Woodpeckers: most CBCs had twice as many Red-bellied as Pileated; avg eight to ten of the former to four or five of the latter. Dutc had nine dur Feb. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: very few, two 28 Dec in P'kpsie, six on MCBC was excellent. Downy Woodpecker: Bob Deed had 11 in the Nyack area of the RCBC, eight of which were picking on the stalks of Phragmites in the Hackensack Sw. A strange activity for them. N. Flicker: Dutc reported 26 dur Feb, an unusually high number.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: flocks of 200-300 wandered thru the Warwick Valley dur the period; MCBC had 439 and more than a thousand were ob at Red Hook on 14 Dec. Am. Crow: largest roost 10,000+ at Middletown. Fish Crow: two or three overwintered in the Hyde Park area. Red-breasted Nuthatch: only three reports of wintering birds, Dutc, scarce. Brown Creeper: max 32 PuCBC. Carolina Wren: on all CBCs, max seven PeCBC; good survival over winter and populations should be high in the coming year. Hermit Thrush: seven PuCBC and four both PeCBC and RCBC, high. Am. Robin: no large wintering flocks, most restricted to a half dozen or more; numbers increased by end of period. **VARIED THRUSH:** an unpublicized report of one on BCBC at Mohonk (no details). Gray Catbird: two at Stonykill, Dutc 12 Feb. Cedar Waxwing: 269 on BCBC was unusually high and 247 on WCBC was a record for that count. N. **SHRIKE:** one unpublicized bird in the T of Ulster (no details); one in Dutc 18 Feb; one at Pound Ridge from last Nov overwintered. **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE:** one at Iona 1 2 Feb (ELM), only report. Eur. Starling: max 11,915 RCBC.

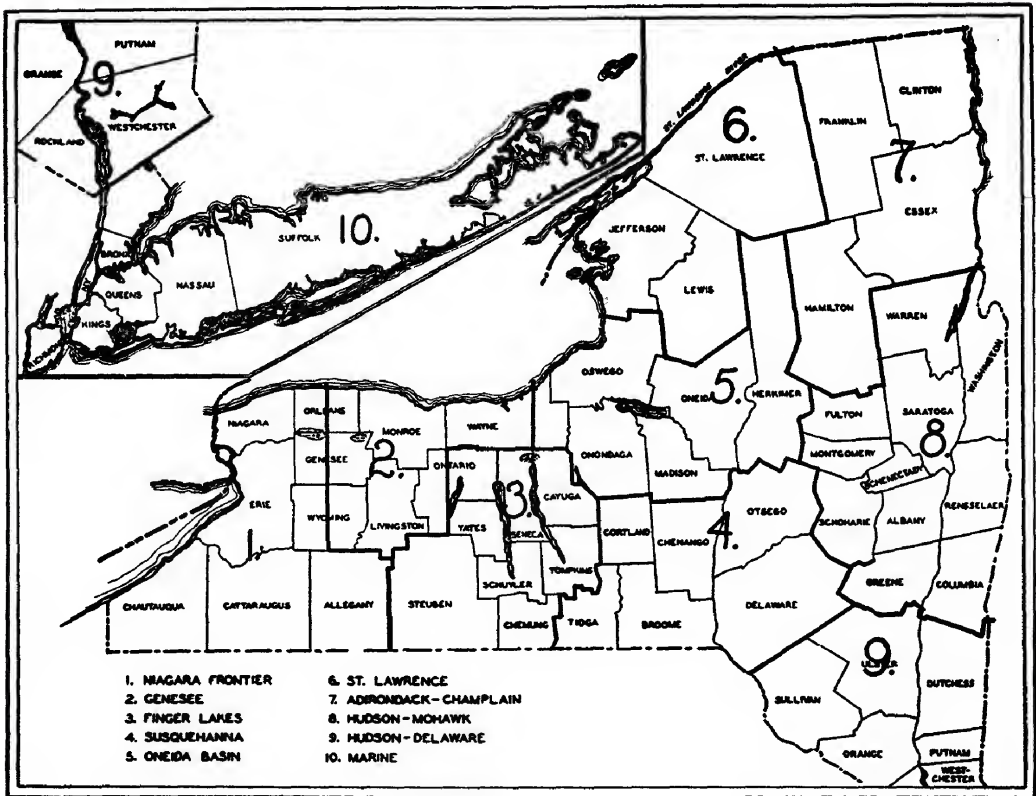
**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS:** **CAPE MAY WARBLER:** one well described at Yorktown 2 Dec (Vince McGrath). Yellow-rumped Warbler: reported on most CBCs, one to three every month in Dutc. **COM. YELLOWTHROAT:** one at New City on 22 Dec was the fourth RCBC record (VS).

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** **W. TANAGER:** a bright female at Croton Pt. 7-14 Dec (JA). **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK:** female or im in the New City area 22 Dec (VS), second for RCBC. Field Sparrow: 50 along Upper Wisner Rd., Warwick 9 Jan, an exceptionally large number (JC); five at Stonykill 1 Jan. **VESPER SPARROW:** two PeCBC, usually unreported in winter. Savannah Sparrow: last two at Stonykill 1 Jan. Fox Sparrow: one at Woodridge, Sull in early Jan, another in P'kpsie 5-9 Dec, rarely found in winter. Song Sparrow: good numbers on all CBCs. Swamp Sparrow: five on BCBC was unusually high. **LAPLAND LONGSPUR:** one Warwick after late Dec; one at Gretna, Dutc 6 Jan and three more at Redhook 7-12 Jan, two on WCBC was their fifth census record in 28 years. Snow Bunting: the few reports were of sizeable flocks scattered thru the region, max 300-500 in the Warwick Valley in Feb. E. Meadowlark: eight in the Purgatory Rd. area of Hamptonburgh; 12 in the Wisner Rd area of Warwick, flocks of seven or eight at several Dutc locations, high for this dwindling species. Rusty Blackbird: very few reports, max 30-40 at Stissing all winter. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** a beautiful glossy male studied for 20 minutes at 20 yds in a manured field along Lower Wisner Rd, Warwick on WVCBC (ET, DM, BC). N. **ORIOLE:** a female fed daily on suet in Monticello from 16 Nov-8 Dec, another at Pleasant Valley on 4, 5, 22 Dec; one in a Mt. Kisco cemetery 21 Dec. Am. Goldfinch: high in Dutc but down elsewhere.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

The Region 10 report had not arrived in time for this issue of *The Kingbird*.

## REPORTING REGIONS



For descriptions of Regions see Kingbird Vol. IV Nos. 1 and 2

## REPORTING DEADLINES

Winter Season: December, January, February  
Deadline is March 7

Spring Season: March, April, May  
Deadline is June 7

Summer Season: June, July, August  
Deadline is September 7

Fall Season: September, October, November  
Deadline is December 7

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